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INTERMEDIATE
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INTERMEDIATE POETICAL SELECTIONS

Anon.

CHEVY CHASE

God prosper long our noble King,
Our lives and safeties all !
A woeful hunting once there did
In Chevy Chase befall.

To drive the deer with hound and horn
Earl Percy took his way :
The child may rue that is unborn
The hunting of that day !

The stout Earl of Northumberland
A vow to God did make,
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
Three summer's days to take ;

The chiefest harts in Chevy Chase
To kill and bear away.
These tidings to Earl Douglas came
In Scotland where he lay :

Who sent Earl Percy present word
He would prevent his sport.
The English Earl, not fearing that,
Did to the woods resort

20

With fifteen hundred bow-men bold,
All chosen men of might,
Who knew full well in time of need
To aim their shafts aright.

The gallant greyhounds swiftly ran
To chase the fallow deer ;
On Monday they began to hunt
Ere daylight did appear ;

And long before high noon they had
A hundred fat bucks slain.
Then having dined, the drovers went
To rouse the deer again ;

30

The bow-men mustered on the hills,
Well able to endure ;
Their backs and sides with special care
That day were guarded sure.

The hounds ran swiftly through the woods,
The nimble deer to take,
That with their cries the hills and dales
An echo shrill did make.

40

Lord Percy to the quarry went
To view the slaughtered deer ;
Quoth he, "Earl Douglas promised once
This day to meet me here ;

"But if I thought he would not come,
No longer would I stay."
With that a brave young gentleman
Thus to the Earl did say,

"Lo, yonder doth Earl Douglas come,
His men in armour bright ;
Full twenty hundred Scottish spears
All marching in our sight ;

50

"All men of pleasant Tivydale
Fast by the river Tweed."
"O cease your sports !" Earl Percy said,
"And take your bows with speed ;

"And now with me, my countrymen,
Your courage forth advance !
For there was never champion yet,
In Scotland or in France,

60

“ That ever did on horseback come,
But if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
With him to break a spear.”

Earl Douglas on his milk-white steed,
Most like a barcn bold,
Rode foremost of his company,
Whose armour shone like gold.

“ Show me,” said he, “ whose men you be
That hunt so boldly here,
That, without my consent, do chase
And kill my fallow deer.”

70

The first man that did answer make
Was noble Percy he,
Who said, “ We list not to declare,
Nor show whose men we be ;

“ Yet we will spend our dearest blood
Thy chiefest harts to slay.”
Then Douglas swore a solemn oath,
And thus in rage did say,

80

“ Ere thus I will out-braved be,
One of us two shall die !
I know thee well ! an earl thou art,
Lord Percy ! so am I ;

“ But trust me, Percy ! pity it were,
And great offence, to kill
Any of these our guiltless men,
For they have done no ill.

“ Let thou and I the battle try,
And set our men aside.” 90
“ Accursed be he ! ” Earl Percy said,
“ By whom this is denied.”

Then stept a gallant squire forth,—
Witherington was his name,—
Who said, “ I would not have it told
To Henry our King, for shame,

“ That ere my captain fought on foot,
And I stood looking on :
You be two earls,” quoth Witherington,
“ And I a squire alone ; 100

“ I’ll do the best that do I may,
While I have power to stand !
While I have power to wield my sword,
I’ll fight with heart and hand ! ”

Our English archers bent their bows—
Their hearts were good and true,—
At the first flight of arrows sent,
Full fourscore Scots they slew.

“ Thy ransom I will freely give ;
And this report of thee,
Thou art the most courageous knight
That ever I did see.”

“ No, Douglas ! ” quoth Earl Percy then,
“ Thy proffer I do scorn ;
I will not yield to any Scot
That ever yet was born ! ”

140

With that, there came an arrow keen
Out of an English bow,
Which struck Earl Douglas on the breast
A deep and deadly blow ;

Who never said more words than these,
“ Fight on, my merry men all !
For why, my life is at an end,
Lord Percy sees my fall.”

Then leaving life, Earl Percy took
The dead man by the hand,
And said, “ Earl Douglas ! for thy sake
Would I had lost my land !

150

“ O Christ ! my very heart doth bleed
With sorrow for thy sake !
For sure, a more redoubted knight,
Mischance could never take ! ”

A knight amongst the Scots there was,
Who saw Earl Douglas die,
Who straight in heart did vow revenge
Upon the Lord Percy.

160

SECOND PART

Sir Hugh Montgomery was he called,
Who, with a spear full bright,
Well mounted on a gallant steed,
Ran fiercely through the fight ;

And past the English archers all
Without or dread or fear,
And through Earl Percy's body then
He thrust his hateful spear

With such a vehement force and might
That his body he did gore ;
The staff ran through the other side
A large cloth-yard and more.

170

Thus did both these nobles die,
Whose courage none could stain.
An English archer then perceived
The noble Earl was slain.

He had a good bow in his hand,
 Made of a trusty tree :
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
 To the hard head haled he.

180

Against Sir Hugh Montgomery
 His shaft full right he set ;
The grey goose-wing that was thereon,
 In his heart's blood was wet.

This fight from break of day did last
 Till setting of the sun ;
For when they rung the evening-bell
 The battle scarce was done.

With stout Earl Percy there were slain,
 Sir John of Egerton,
Sir Robert Harcliffe and Sir William,
 Sir James, that bold baron ;

190

And with Sir George and stout Sir James,
 Both knights of good account,
Good Sir Ralph Raby there was slain,
 Whose prowess did surmount.

For Witherington needs must I wail
 As one in doleful dumps,
For when his legs were smitten off,
 He fought upon his stumps.

200

And with Earl Douglas there were slain
Sir Hugh Montgomery,
Sir Charles Morrell that from the field
One foot would never flee ;

Sir Roger Hever of Harcliffe too,—
His sister's son was he,—
Sir David Lamb so well-esteemed,
But saved he could not be ;

And the Lord Maxwell in like case
With Douglas he did die ;
Of twenty hundred Scottish spears,
Scarce fifty-five did fly ;

210

Of fifteen hundred Englishmen
Went home but fifty-three ;
The rest in Chevy Chase were slain,
Under the greenwood tree.

Next day did many widows come
Their husbands to bewail ;
They washed their wounds in brinish tears,
But all would not prevail.

220

Their bodies, bathed in purple blood,
They bore with them away,
They kissed them dead a thousand times
Ere they were clad in clay.

The news was brought to Edinburgh
Where Scotland's King did reign,
That brave Earl Douglas suddenly
Was with an arrow slain.

“ O heavy news !” King James did say,
“ Scotland may witness be, 230
I have not any captain more
Of such account as he !”

Like tidings to King Henry came
Within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland
Was slain in Chevy Chase.

“ Now God be with him !” said our King,
“ Since it will no better be,
I trust I have within my realm
Five hundred as good as he ! 240

“ Yet shall not Scots nor Scotland say,
But I will vengeance take,
And be revenged on them all
For brave Earl Percy's sake.”

This vow the King did well perform
After at Humbledown ;
In one day fifty knights were slain,
With lords of great renown.

And of the rest, of small account,
Did many hundreds die : 250
Thus endeth the hunting in Chevy Chase
Made by the Earl Percy.

God save our King, and bless this land
With plenty, joy, and peace ;
And grant henceforth that foul debate
'Twixt noble men may cease !

— — —

OLD MAY SONG

All in this pleasant evening, together come are we,
For the summer springs so fresh, green, and gay ;
We tell you of a blossoming and buds on every tree,
Drawing near unto the merry month of May.

Rise up, the master of this house, put on your
charm of gold,
For the summer springs so fresh, green, and gay ;
Be not in pride offended with your name we make
so bold,
Drawing near unto the merry month of May.

Rise up, the mistress of this house, with gold along
your breast,

For the summer springs so fresh, green, and gay ; 10
And if your body be asleep, we hope your soul's at
rest,

Drawing near unto the merry month of May.

Rise up, the children of this house, all in your rich
attire,

For the summer springs so fresh, green, and gay ;
And every hair upon your heads shines like the
silver wire :

Drawing near unto the merry month of May.

God bless this house and harbour, your riches and
your store,

For the summer springs so fresh, green, and gay ;
We hope the Lord will prosper you, both now and
evermore,

Drawing near unto the merry month of May. 20

And now comes we must leave you, in peace and
plenty here,

For the summer springs so fresh, green, and gay ;
We shall not sing you May again until another year,
To draw you these cold winters away.

John Lyly

THE SPRING

What bird so sings, yet so does wail ?
O, 'tis the ravished nightingale.
“ Jug, jug, jug, jug, tereu,” she cries,
And still her woes at midnight rise.
Brave prick-song ! who is't now we hear ?
None but the lark so shrill and clear ;
How at heaven's gates she claps her wings,
The morn not waking till she sings.
Hark, hark, with what a pretty throat
Poor Robin Red-breast tunes his note ; 10
Hark, how the jolly cuckoos sing
‘ Cuckoo,’ to welcome in the spring,
‘ Cuckoo,’ to welcome in the spring.

William Shakespeare

“ WHEN TO THE SESSIONS OF SWEET
SILENT THOUGHT ”

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste :

Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long-since-cancelled woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er 10
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before:
—But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored, and sorrows end.

“ THAT TIME OF YEAR THOU MAY’ST
IN ME BEHOLD ”

That time of year thou may’st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold—
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see’st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death’s second self, that seals up all in rest.

In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, 10
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourished by.

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love
more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

“ COME AWAY, COME AWAY, DEATH ”

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid ;
Fly away, fly away, breath ;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O ! prepare it.
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown ; 10
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corse, where my bones shall be thrown.
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O ! where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there.

Under the greenwood tree
 Who loves to lie with me,
 And turn his merry note
 Unto the sweet bird's throat,
 Come hither, come hither, come hither :
 Here shall he see
 No enemy
 But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun,
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats,
And pleas'd with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither :
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude ;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh-ho ! sing, heigh-ho ! unto the green holly :
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.

Then heigh-ho ! the holly !

This life is most jolly. 10

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,

That dost not bite so nigh

As benefits forgot :

Though thou the waters warp,

Thy sting is not so sharp

As friend remember'd not.

Heigh-ho ! sing, heigh-ho ! unto the green holly :
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.

Then heigh-ho ! the holly !

This life is most jolly. 20

“ HOW SHOULD I YOUR TRUE LOVE KNOW ”

How should I your true love know

From another one ?

By his cockle hat and staff,

And his sandal shoon.

He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone ;

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.

White his shroud as the mountain snow,—

Larded with sweet flowers :

10

Which bewept to the grave did go

With true-love showers.

“HARK ! HARK ! THE LARK AT HEAVEN’S
GATE SINGS ”

Hark, hark ! the lark at heaven's gate sings,

And Phoebus 'gins arise,

His steeds to water at those springs

On chalice'd flowers that lies ;

And winking Mary-buds begin

To ope their golden eyes ;

With every thing that pretty is,

My lady sweet, arise :

Arise, arise !

"WHEN ICICLES HANG BY THE WALL"

When icicles hang by the wall,

And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,

And 'Tom bears logs into the hall,

And milk comes frozen home in pail,

When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul,
 Then nightly sings the staring owl,
~ Tu-who ;
 Tu-whit, tu-who—a merry note,
 While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
 And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
 And birds sit brooding in the snow,
 And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
 When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
 Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tu-who ;
 Tu-whit, tu-who—a merry note,
 When greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

Ben Jonson

EPITAPH ON ELIZABETH, L. H.

Wouldst thou hear what man can say
 In a little ? Reader, stay.
 Underneath this stone doth lie
 As much beauty. as could die ;
 Which in life did harbour give
 To more virtue than doth live.
 If, at all, she had a fault,
 Leave it buried in this vault.

One name was Elizabeth;
The other, let it sleep with death : 10
Fitter, where it died to tell,
Than that it lived at all. Farewell !

John Fletcher

“ CARE-CHARMING SLEEP THOU EASER
OF ALL WOES ”

Care-charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
Brother to Death, sweetly thy self dispose
On this afflicted Prince, fall like a cloud
In gentle showers, give nothing that is loud,
Or painful to his slumbers ; easy, light,
And as a purling stream, thou son of Night,
Pass by his troubled senses ; sing his pain
Like hollow murmuring wind, or silver rain ;
Into this prince gently, oh, gently slide,
And kiss him into slumbers like a bride !

George Herbert

VIRTUE

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night ;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
 Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
 Thy root is ever in its grave,
 And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
 A box where sweets compacted lie, 10
 My music shows ye have your closes,
 And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
 Like season'd timber, never gives ;
 But though the whole world turn to coal,
 Then chiefly lives.



THE COLLAR

I struck the board, and cried, 'No more ;
 I will abroad.
 What ? shall I ever sigh and pine ?
 My lines and life are free ; free as the road,
 Loose as the wind, as large as store.
 Shall I be still in suit ?
 Have I no harvest but a thorn
 To let me blood, and not restore
 What I have lost with cordial fruit ?
 Sure there was wine 10

Before my sighs did dry it : there was corn

Before my tears did drown it.

Is the year only lost to me ?

Have I no bays to crown it,

No flowers, no garlands gay ? all blasted,

All wasted ?

Not so, my heart : but there is fruit,

And thou hast hands.

Recover all thy sigh-blown age

On double pleasures : leave thy cold dispute 20

Of what is fit, and not ; forsake thy cage,

Thy rope of sands

Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee

Good cable, to enforce and draw,

And be thy law,

While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.

Away ; take heed :

I will abroad.

Call in thy death's-head there : tie up thy fears.

He that forbears 30

To suit and serve his need,

Deserves his load.'

But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild

At every word,

Methought I heard one calling, 'Child' :

And I replied, 'My Lord.'

THE PULLEY

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
Let us (said He) pour on him all we can.
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way ;
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure.
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone, of all his treasure
Rest in the bottom lay. 10

For if I should (said He)
Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature ;
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness.
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast. 20

John Milton
PARADISE LOST

BOOK I.

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the Heavens and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill 10
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st; thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread, 20
Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That to the highth of this great argument

I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first (for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell) say first what cause
Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,
Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off 30
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides ?
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt ?
The infernal Serpent ; he it was, whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The Mother of Mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equalled the Most High, 40
If he opposed ; and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition ; there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

Nine times the space that measures day and night 50
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,

Confounded though immortal.^a But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath ; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him : round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.
At once, as far as Angels ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild : 60
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed ; yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all ; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared. . 70
For those rebellious ; here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set,
As far removed from God and light of Heaven
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.
Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell !
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelm'd
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns ; and, weltering by his side,
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named 80

Beëlzebub. To whom the Arch-Enemy,
And thence in Heaven called Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began :

“If thou beest he—but Oh how fallen ! how changed
From him, who in the happy realms of light,
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads, though bright ! if he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined 90
In equal ruin : into what pit thou seest
From what highth fallen, so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder : and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms ? yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind,
And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along 100
Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost ?
All is not lost ; the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield :

And what is else not to be overcome ?
That glory never shall his wrath or might 110
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
Doubted his empire—that were low indeed ;
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall ; since by fate the strength of gods
And this empyreal substance cannot fail ;
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve 120
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand foe,
Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven.”

So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair ;
And him thus answered soon his bold compeer :

“ O Prince, O Chief of many thronèd powers,
That led the embattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds 130
Fearless, endangered Heaven’s perpetual King ;
And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate !
Too well I see and rue the dire event
That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host

In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as gods and heavenly essences
Can perish : for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigour soon returns, 140
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.
But what if he our Conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe Almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be, 150
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep ;
What can it then avail though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment ? ”

Whereto with speedy words the Arch-fiend replied :

“ Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering : but of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight, 160
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,

And out of good still to find means of evil ;
Which ofttimes may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see ! the angry Victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of Heaven : the sulphurous
hail

170

Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
The fiery surge, that from the precipice
Of Heaven received us falling, and the thunder,
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.
Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn,
Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.

Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful ? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
There rest, if any rest can harbour there;
And reassembling our afflicted Powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire calamity,

180

What reinforcements we may gain from hope,
If not, what resolution from despair."

190

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
With head up-lift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed, his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareos or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast 200
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream.
Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,
Deeming some island, oft, as sea-men tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wished morn delays.
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay
Chained on the burning lake, nor ever thence 210
Had risen or heaved his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others, and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn
On man by him seduced, but on himself

Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured. 220
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature ; on each hand the flames
Driven backward slope their pointing spires, and
rolled

In billows, leave i' the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air
That felt unusual weight, till on dry land
He lights, if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire ;
And such appeared in hue, as when the force 230
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thundering *Ætna*, whose combustible
And fuelled entrails thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singed bottom all involved
With stench and smoke : such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate,
Both glorying to have 'scaped the Stygian flood,
As gods, and by their own recovered strength, 240
Not by the sufferance of supernal power.

“Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,”
Said then the lost Archangel, “this the seat
That we must change for Heaven, this mournful
gloom

For that celestial light ? Be it so, since he

Who now is sovran can dispose and bid
What shall be right : farthest from him is best,
Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made
supreme

Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells ! Hail, horrors ! hail, 250
Infernal World ! and thou, profoundest Hell.
Receive thy new possessor : one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.

What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater ? Here at least
We shall be free ; the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence : 260
Here we may reign secure, and in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition though in Hell :
Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven.
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
The associates and co-partners of our loss,
Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool,
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy mansion, or once more
With rallied arms to try what may be yet
Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell ?" 270

So Satan spake, and him Beëlzebub
Thus answered : "Leader of those armies bright,

Which but the Omnipotent none could have foiled,
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal, they will soon resume
New courage and revive, though now they lie
Grovvelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire, 280
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed,
No wonder, fallen such a pernicious highth."

He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend
Was moving toward the shore ; his ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large and round,
Behind him cast ; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening from the top of Fesolè,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands, 290
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
His spear, to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great ammiral, were but a wand,
He walked with to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marle, not like those steps
On Heaven's azure, and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire ;
Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamed sea, he stood and called 300

His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced
Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
High over-arched embower ; or scattered sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses 310
And broken chariot-wheels, so thick bestrown,
Abject and lost lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.
He called so loud, that all the hollow deep
Of Hell resounded : "Princes, Potentates,
Warriors, the flower of Heaven, once yours, now lost,
If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal Spirits ; or have ye chosen this place
After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find 320
To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven ?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds
Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern
The advantage, and descending tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts

Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf ?

Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen ! " 330

They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceive the evi' plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel ;
Yet to their General's voice they soon obeyed
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son in Egypt's evil day
Waved round the coast, up called a pitchy cloud 340
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile :
So numberless were those bad Angels seen
Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell,
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires ;
Till, as a signal given, the uplifted spear
Of their great Sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light.
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain ; 350
A multitude, like which the populous North
Poured never from her frozen loins, to pass
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.
Forthwith, from every squadron and each band,

The heads and leaders thither haste where stood
Their great Commander ; godlike Shapes, and Forms
Excelling human, princely Dignities,
And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones ; 360
Though of their names in Heavenly records now
Be no memorial, blotted out and rased
By their rebellion, from the Books of Life.

All these and more came flocking ; but with looks
Downcast and damp, yet such wherein appeared
Obscure some glimpse of joy, to have found their chief
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
In loss itself ; which on his countenance cast
Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore 370
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears :
Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound
Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
His mighty standard ; that proud honour claimed
Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall :
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
The imperial ensign, which, full high advanced,
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed, 380
Seraphic arms and trophies : all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds :
At which the universal host upsent
A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond

Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
With orient colours waving: with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array 390
Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders; such as raised
To highth of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle, and instead of rage
Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and 'swage
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain 400
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force with fixed thought,
Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed
Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And now
Advanced in view they stand, a horrid front
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
Of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield,
Awaiting what command their mighty Chief
Had to impose. He through the armed files
Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse 410
The whole battalion views, their order due,
Their visages and stature as of gods;

Their number last he sums. And now his heart
Distends with pride, and hardening in his strength
Glories: for never, since created Man,
Met such embodied force as, named with these,
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes: though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra with the heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side 420
Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son,
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisonde,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed 430
Their dread Commander: he, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower; his form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change 440

Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone
Above them all the Arch-angel: but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
For ever now to have their lot in pain, 450
Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
For his revolt—yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory withered. As when Heaven's fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks, or mountain pines,
With singèd top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
With all his peers: attention held them mute. 460
Thrice he essayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words interwove with sighs found out their way:

“ O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers
Matchless, but with the Almighty!—and that strife
Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change,
Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,

Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have feared 470
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse ?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to re-ascend
Self-raised, and re-possess their native seat ?
For me, be witness all the host of Heaven,
If counsels different, or danger shunned
By me, have lost our hopes. But He who reigns
Monarch in Heaven, till then as one secure 480
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent or custom, and his regal state
Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed,
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own
So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war, provoked ; our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not : that he no less
At length from us may find, who overcomes 490
By force, hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new worlds ; whereof so rife
There went a fame in Heaven that he ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation, whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven.

Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption, thither or elsewhere :
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor the Abyss 600
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired,
For who can think submission ? War then, war
Open or understood, must be resolved. ''

He spake ; and to confirm his words, outflow
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim ; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined Hell : highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war, 510
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven,

There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
Belched fire and rolling smoke ; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf, undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither winged with speed,
A numerous brigade hastened. As when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on, 520
Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
From Heaven, for even in Heaven his looks and
thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more

The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific. By him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransacked the Centre, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew 530
Opened into the hill a spacious wound
And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire
That riches grow in Hell ; that soil may best
Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
What in an age they, with incessant toil 540
And hands innumerable, scarce perform.
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wondrous art founded the massy ore,
Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion-dross.
A third as soon had formed within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook ;
As in an organ from one blast of wind 550
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.

Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
Built like a temple, where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
With golden architrave ; nor did there want
Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven :
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence 560
Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
Stood fixed her stately highth ; and straight the doors,
Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces, o'er the smooth
And level pavement ; from the archèd roof,
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed 570
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky. The hasty multitude
Admiring entered, and the work some praise
And some the architect. His hand was known
In Heaven by many a towered structure high,
Where sceptred Angels held their residence,
And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright.

Nor was his name unheard or unadored 580
In ancient Greece ; and in Ausonian land
Men called him Mulciber ; and how he fell
From Heaven, they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements : from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day ; and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith like a falling star,
On Lemnos, the Ægæan isle : thus they relate,
Erring ; for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before ; nor aught availed him now 590
To have built in Heaven high towers ; nor did he scape
By all his engines, but was headlong sent,
With his industrious crew to build in Hell.

Meanwhile the winged haralds, by command
Of sovran power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council forthwith to be held
At Pandemonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers : their summons called
From every band and squared regiment 600
By place or choice the worthiest ; they anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
Attended : all access was thronged, the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
(Though like a covered field, where champions bold
Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair
Defied the best of Panim chivalry

To mortal combat, or career with lance),
Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive 610
In clusters ; they among fresh dewes and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothlèd plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubbed with balm, expatiate and confer
Their state affairs. So thick the aery crowd
Swarmed and were straitened ; till, the signal given,
Behold a wonder ! they but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons, 620
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless, like that pygmean race
Beyond the Indian mount, or faery elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the Moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth
Wheels her pale course : they, on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear ;
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds. 630
Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,
Though without number still, amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions like themselves,

The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
 In close recess and secret conclave sat,
 A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
 Frequent and full. After short silence then,
 And summons read, the great consult began.

640

SABRINA

Song to Sabrina

Sabrina fair,
 Listen where thou art sitting
 Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
 In twisted braids of lilies knitting
 The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair ;
 Listen for dear honour's sake,
 Goddess of the silver lake,
 Listen and save.

.....

Sabrina rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings.

By the rushy-fringed bank,
 Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
 My sliding chariot stays,
 Thick set with agate, and the azure sheen
 Of turquoise blue, and emerald green
 That in the channel strays ;
 Whilst from off the waters fleet

Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
 That bends not as I tread ;
Gentle swain, at thy request
 I am here.

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE
AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year !
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
That I to manhood am arrived so near ;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.
Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of
 Heaven.

10

All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye,

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL,
MAY, 1652,

On the proposals of certain ministers at the Committee for Propagation of the Gospel.

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and His work pursued,
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories 10
No less renowned than War; new foes arise,
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
“ Doth God exact day-labour, light denied ? ”
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, “ God doth not need
Either man’s work or his own gifts. Who best 10
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly : thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o’er land and ocean without rest ;
They also serve who only stand and wait.”

TO CYRIACK SKINNER UPON HIS BLINDNESS

Cyriack, this three years’ day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot,
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven’s hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask ?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied 10
In Liberty’s defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe talks from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world’s vain mask
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

“ METHOUGHT I SAW MY LATE
ESPOUSED SAINT ”

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me, like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great Son to her glad husband gave,
Rescu'd from death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint,
Purification in the old Law did save,
And such, as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
Her face was veiled ; yet to my fancied sight, 10
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But, Oh ! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

Andrew Marvell

BERMUDAS

Where the remote Bermudas ride,
In th'ocean's bosom unespied,
From a small boat, that rowed along,
The listening winds received this song

“ What should we do but sing His praise
That led us through the watery maze
Unto an isle so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own ?
Where He the huge sea-monsters wracks,
That lift the deep upon their backs, 10
He lands us on a grassy stage,
Safe from the storms, and prelate's rage :
He gave us this eternal spring,
Which here enamels everything,
And sends the fowls to us in care,
On daily visits through the air ;
He hangs in shades the orange bright,
Like golden lamps in a green night,
And does in the pomegranates close
Jewels more rich than Ormus shows : 20
He makes the figs our mouths to meet,
And throws the melons at our feet ;
But apples plants of such a price,
No tree could ever bear them twice.
With cedars, chosen by His hand
From Lebanon, He stores the land ;
And makes the hollow seas, that roar,
Proclaim the ambergris on shore.
He cast (of which we rather boast)
The Gospel's pearl upon our coast ; 30
And in these rocks for us did frame
A temple, where to sound His name.

Oh! let our voice His praise exalt
 Till it arrive at Heaven's vault,
 Which thence (perhaps) rebounding may
 Echo beyond the Mexique Bay ! "

Thus sung they, in the English boat
 An holy and a cheerful note :
 And all the way, to guide their chime,
 With falling oars they kept the time.

40

John Dryden

SONG FOR SAINT CECILIA'S DAY, 1687

From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony

This universal frame began :

When Nature underneath a heap

Of jarring atoms lay

And could not heave her head,

The tuneful voice was heard from high,

Arise, ye more than dead !

Then cold, and hot, and moist, and dry

In order to their stations leap,

And Music's power obey.

10

From harmony, from heavenly harmony

This universal frame began :

From harmony to harmony

Through all the compass of the notes it ran,

The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell ?

When Jubal struck the chorded shell
His listening brethren stood around,
And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound : 20
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell ?

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum 30
Cries ' Hark ! the foes come ;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat ! '

The soft complaining flute,
In dying notes, discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whisper'd by the warbling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion 40
For the fair disdainful dame.

But oh ! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach
 The sacred organ's praise ?
Notes inspiring holy love,
 Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race ;
And trees unrooted left their place
 Sequacious of the lyre : 50
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher :
When to her Organ vocal breath was given,
An Angel heard, and straight appear'd—
 Mistaking Earth for Heaven.

Grand Chorus

As from the power of sacred lays
 The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
 To all the blest above ;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour 60
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

Thomas Gray

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY
CHURCH-YARD

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
 The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
 The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
 And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
 Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
 And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds ;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
 The moping owl does to the moon complain 10
 Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bower,
 Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
 Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
 Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
 The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
 The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
 The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
 No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. 20

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
 Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;
 Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
 Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre :

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
 Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll ; 50
 Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
 And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
 The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear :
 Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
 The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
 Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
 Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood. 60

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
 The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
 And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade ; nor circumscribed alone
 Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined ;
 Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
 And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame, 70
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learned to stray ;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet e'en these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh. 80

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply ;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind ?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires ; 90
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonoured Dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate ;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
'Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn. 100

' There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

' Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

'One morn I missed him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his favourite tree ; 110
Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he ;

'The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.'

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown ;
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own. 120

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send ;
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a
friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

William Collins

ODE TO EVENING

If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs and dying gales ;

O Nymph reserved, while now the bright-hair'd sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,

With braid ethereal wove,

O'erhang his wavy bed :

Now air is hush'd, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing, 10

Or where the beetle winds

His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises, 'midst the twilight path

Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum :

Now teach me, maid composed,

To breathe some soften'd strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,

As, musing slow, I hail

Thy genial loved return !

20

For when thy folding-star arising shows

His paly circlet, at his warning lamp

The fragrant hours, and elves

Who slept in buds the day,

And many a Nymph who wreathes her brows with

sedge,

And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier still,

The pensive Pleasure sweet,

Prepare thy shadowy car :

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallow'd pile, 30
Or upland fallows grey
Reflect its last cool gleam.

Or if chill blustering winds, or driving rain
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut
That from the mountain's side,
Views wilds and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discover'd spires ;
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil. 40

While Spring shall pour his show'rs, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve !
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light ;

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves,
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes ;

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipped Health, 50
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favourite name !

William Cowper

THE CASTAWAY

Obscurest night involv'd the sky,
Th' Atlantic billows roar'd,
When such a destin'd wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship left Albion's coast
With warmer wishes sent.

10

He lov'd them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay ;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away ;
But wag'd with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted : nor his friends had fail'd
To check the vessel's course,
But so the furious blast prevail'd,
That, pitiless perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

20

Some succour yet they could afford ;
And, such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
Delay'd not to bestow.
But he (they knew) nor ship, nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

30

Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them ;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean, self-upheld ;
And so long he, with unspent pow'r,
His destiny repell'd ;
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried—'Adieu' !

40

At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in ev'ry blast,
Could catch the sound no more.
For then, by toil subdued, he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

No poet wept him : but the page
 Of narrative sincere, 50
That tells his name, his worth, his age,
 Is wet with Anson's tear.
And tears by bards or heroes shed
Alike immortalise the dead.

I therefore purpose not, or dream,
 Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
 A more enduring date :
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case. 60

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
 No light propitious shone ;
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
 We perish'd, each alone :
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he.

ON THE RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S
PICTURE OUT OF NORFOLK

Oh that those lips had language ! Life has pass'd
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smiles I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me ;

Voice only fails, else, how distinct they say,
“ Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away ! ”
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,
The art that baffles time's tyrannic claim
To quench it) here shines on me still the same. 10

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,
Oh welcome guest, though unexpected, here !
Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long,
I will obey, not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own :
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief—
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,
A momentary dream, that thou art she. 20

My mother ! when I learn'd that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed ?
Hover'd thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun ?
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unseen, a kiss ;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile ! it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nurs'ry window, drew 30
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu !
But was it such ?—It was.—Where thou art gone

Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting sound shall pass my lips no more !
Thy maidens griev'd themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of a quick return.
What ardently I wish'd, I long believ'd,
And, disappointed still, was still deceiv'd ;
By disappointment every day beguil'd,
Dupe of *to-morrow* even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learn'd at last submission to my lot ;
But, though I less deplor'd thee, ne'er forgot.

Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,
Children not thine have trod my nurs'ry floor ;
And where the gard'ner Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapt 50
In scarlet mantle, warm, and velvet capt,
'Tis now become a history little known
That once we call'd the past'ral house our own.
Short-liv'd possession ! but the record fair
That mem'ry keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm that has effac'd
A thousand other themes less deeply trac'd.
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou might'st know me safe and warmly laid ;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home, 60

The biscuit, or confectionary plum ;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestow'd
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glow'd ;
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and brakes
That humour interpos'd too often makes ;
All this still legible in mem'ry's page,
And still to be so, to my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay 70
Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,
Not scorn'd in heav'n, though little notic'd here.

Could time, his flight revers'd, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flow'rs,
The violet, the pink, and jessamine,
I prick'd them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while,
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile)
Could those few pleasant hours again appear, 80
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here ?
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desir'd, perhaps I might.—
But no,—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be lov'd, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast
(The storms all weather'd and the ocean cross'd)
Shoots into port at some well-haven'd isle, 90
Where spices breathe and brighter seasons smile,
There sits quiescent on the floods that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ;
So thou, with sails how swift ! hast reach'd the shore
" Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,"
And thy lov'd consort on the dang'rous tide
Of life, long since, has anchor'd at thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest, 100
Always from port withheld, always distress'd—
Me howling winds drive devious, tempest-toss'd,
Sails ript, seams op'ning wide, and compass lost,
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosp'rous course.
But oh the thought, that thou art safe, and he !
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthron'd, and rulers of the earth ;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise— 110
The son of parents pass'd into the skies.
And now, farewell—time, unrevok'd, has run
His wonted course, yet what I wish'd is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem t' have liv'd my childhood o'er again ;

To have renew'd the joys that once were mine,
 Without the sin of violating thine :
 And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
 And I can view this mimic show of thee,
 Time has but half succeeded in his theft— 120
 Thyself remov'd, thy power to soothe me left.

George Crabbe

PETER GRIMES

From " The Borough "

Old Peter Grimes made fishing his employ,
 His wife he cabin'd with him and his boy,
 And seem'd that life laborious to enjoy :
 To town came quiet Peter with his fish,
 And had of all a civil word and wish.
 He left his trade upon the sabbath-day,
 And took young Peter in his hand to pray :
 But soon the stubborn boy from care broke loose,
 At first refused, then added his abuse :
 His father's love he scorn'd, his power defied, 10
 But being drunk, wept sorely when he died.

Yes ! then he wept, and to his mind there came
 Much of his conduct, and he felt the shame,—
 How he had oft the good old man reviled,
 And never paid the duty of a child ;

How, when the father in his Bible read,
He in contempt and anger left the shed :
' It is the word of life,' the parent cried ;
—' This is the life itself,' the boy replied ;
And while old Peter in amazement stood, 20
Gave the hot spirit to his boiling blood :—
How he, with oath and furious speech, began
To prove his freedom and assert the man ;
And when the parent check'd his impious rage,
How he had cursed the tyranny of age,—
Nay, once had dealt the sacrilegious blow
On his bare head, and laid his parent low ;
The father groan'd—' If thou art old,' said he,
' And hast a son—thou wilt remember me :
Thy mother left me in a happy time, 30
Thou kill'dst not her—Heav'n spares the double crime.'

On an inn-settle, in his maudlin grief,
This he revolved, and drank for his relief.

Now lived the youth in freedom, but debarr'd
From constant pleasure, and he thought it hard ;
Hard that he could not every wish obey,
But must awhile relinquish ale and play ;
Hard ! that he could not to his cards attend,
But must acquire the money he would spend.

With greedy eye he look'd on all he saw, 40
He knew not justice, and he laugh'd at law ;

On all he mark'd he stretch'd his ready hand ;
He fish'd by water, and he filch'd by land :
Oft in the night has Peter dropp'd his oar,
Fled from his boat and sought for prey on shore ;
Oft up the hedge-row glided, on his back
Bearing the orchard's produce in a sack,
Or farm-yard load, tugg'd fiercely from the stack ;
And as these wrongs to greater numbers rose,
The more he look'd on all men as his foes. 50

He built a mud-wall'd hovel, where he kept
His various wealth, and there he oft-times slept ;
But no success could please his cruel soul,
He wish'd for one to trouble and control ;
He wanted some obedient boy to stand
And bear the blow of his outrageous hand ;
And hoped to find in some propitious hour
A feeling creature subject to his power.

Peter had heard there were in London then,—
Still have they being !—workhouse-clearing men, 60
Who, undisturb'd by feeling just or kind,
Would parish-boys to needy tradesmen bind.
They in their want a trifling sum would take,
And toiling slaves of piteous orphans make.

Such Peter sought, and when a lad was found,
The sum was dealt him, and the slave was bound.
Some few in town observed in Peter's trap
A boy, with jacket blue and woollen cap ;

But none inquired how Peter used the rope,
Or what the bruise, that made the stripling stoop ; 70
None could the ridges on his back behold,
None sought him shiv'ring in the winter's cold ;
None put the question,—‘ Peter, dost thou give
The boy his food ?—What, man ! the lad must live :
Consider, Peter, let the child have bread,
He'll serve thee better if he's stroked and fed.’
None reason'd thus—and some, on hearing cries,
Said calmly, ‘ Grimes is at his exercise.’

Pinn'd, beaten, cold, pinch'd, threaten'd,
and abused—
His efforts punish'd and his food refused,— 80
Awake tormented,—soon aroused from sleep,—
Struck if he wept, and yet compell'd to weep,
The trembling boy dropp'd down and strove to pray,
Received a blow, and trembling turn'd away,
Or sobb'd and hid his piteous face ;—while he,
The savage master, grinn'd in horrid glee :
He'd now the power he ever loved to show,
A feeling being subject to his blow.

Thus lived the lad, in hunger, peril, pain,
His tears despised, his supplications vain : 90
Compell'd by fear to lie, by need to steal,
His bed uneasy and unblest his meal,
For three sad years the boy his tortures bore,
And then his pains and trials were no more.

‘ How died he, Peter ? ’ when the people said,
He growl’d—‘ I found him lifeless in his bed ;’
Then tried for softer tone, and sigh’d, ‘ Poor Sam
is dead.’

Yet murmurs were there, and some questions ask’d,—
How he was fed, how punish’d, and how task’d ?
Much they suspected, but they little proved, 100
And Peter pass’d untroubled and unmoved.

Another boy with equal ease was found,
The money granted, and the victim bound ;
And what his fate ?—One night it chanced he fell
From the boat’s mast and perish’d in her well,
Where fish were living kept, and where the boy
(So reason’d men) could not himself destroy :—

‘ Yes! so it was,’ said Peter, ‘ in his play,
(For he was idle both by night and day)
He climb’d the main-mast and then fell below ;’— 110
Then show’d his corpse and pointed to the blow :
‘ What said the jury ? ’—they were long in doubt,
But sturdy Peter faced the matter out :
So they dismiss’d him, saying at the time,
‘ Keep fast your hatchway when you’ve boys who
climb.’

This hit the conscience, and he colour’d more
Than for the closest questions put before.

Thus all his fears the verdict set aside,
And at the slave-shop Peter still applied.

Then came a boy, of manners soft and mild,— 120
Our seamen's wives with grief beheld the child ;
All thought (the poor themselves) that he was one
Of gentle blood, some noble sinner's son,
Who had, belike, deceived some humble maid,
Whom he had first seduced and then betray'd :—
However this, he seem'd a gracious lad,
In grief submissive and with patience sad.

Passive he labour'd, till his slender frame
Bent with his loads, and he at length was lame :
Strange that a frame so weak could bear so long 130
The grossest insult and the foulest wrong ;
But there were causes—in the town they gave
Fire, food, and comfort, to the gentle slave ;
And though stern Peter, with a cruel hand,
And knotted rope, enforced the rude command,
Yet he consider'd what he'd lately felt,
And his vile blows with selfish pity dealt.

One day such draughts the cruel fisher made,
He could not vend them in his borough-trade,
But sail'd for London-mart : the boy was ill, 140
But ever humbled to his master's will ;
And on the river, where they smoothly sail'd,
He strove with terror and awhile prevail'd ;
But new to danger on the angry sea,
He clung affrighten'd to his master's knee :
The boat grew leaky and the wind was strong,
Rough was the passage and the time was long ;

The water only, when the tides were high,
When low, the mud half-cover'd and half-dry ;
The sun-burnt tar that blisters on the planks,
And bank-side stakes in their uneven ranks ;
Heaps of entangled weeds that slowly float,
As the tide rolls by the impeded boat. 180

When tides were neap, and, in the sultry day,
Through the tall bounding mud-banks made their way,
Which on each side rose swelling, and below
The dark warm flood ran silently and slow ;
There anchoring, Peter chose from man to hide,
There hang his head, and view the lazy tide
In its hot slimy channel slowly glide ;
Where the small eels that left the deeper way
For the warm shore, within the shallows play ;
Where gaping muscles, left upon the mud, 190
Slope their slow passage to the fallen flood ;—
Here dull and hopeless he'd lie down and trace
How sidelong crabs had scrawl'd their crooked race ;
Or sadly listen to the tuneless cry
Of fishing gull or clanging golden-eye ;
What time the sea-birds to the marsh would come,
And the loud bittern, from the bull-rush home,
Gave from the salt-ditch side the bellowing boom :
He nursed the feelings these dull scenes produce,
And loved to stop beside the opening sluice ; 200
Where the small stream, confined in narrow bound,
Ran with a dull, unvaried, sadd'ning sound ;

Where all, presented to the eye or ear,
Oppress'd the soul with misery, grief, and fear.

Besides these objects, there were places three,
Which Peter seem'd with certain dread to see ;
When he drew near them he would turn from each,
And loudly whistle till he pass'd the reach.

A change of scene to him brought no relief ;
In town, 'twas plain, men took him for a thief : 210
The sailors' wives would stop him in the street,
And say, ' Now, Peter, thou'st no boy to beat : '
Infants at play, when they perceived him, ran,
Warning each other—' That's the wicked man : '
He growl'd an oath, and in an angry tone
Cursed the whole place and wish'd to be alone.

Alone he was, the same dull scenes in view,
And still more gloomy in his sight they grew :
Though man he hated, yet employ'd alone
At bootless labour, he would swear and groan, 220
Cursing the shoals that glided by the spot,
And gulls that caught them when his arts could not.

Cold nervous trembling shook his sturdy frame,
And strange disease—he couldn't say the name ;
Wild were his dreams, and oft he rose in fright,
Waked by his view of horrors in the night,—
Horrors that would the sternest minds amaze,
Horrors that demons might be proud to raise :

And though he felt forsaken, grieved at heart,
To think he lived from all mankind apart ; 230
Yet, if a man approach'd, in terrors he would start.

A winter pass'd since Peter saw the town,
And summer-lodgers were again come down ;
These, idly curious, with their glasses spied
The ships in bay as anchor'd for the tide,—
The river's craft,—the bustle of the quay,—
And sea-port views, which landmen love to see.

One, up the river, had a man and boat
Seen day by day, now anchor'd, now afloat ;
Fisher he seem'd, yet used no net nor hook ; 240
Of sea-fowl swimming by no heed he took,
But on the gliding waves still fix'd his lazy look :
At certain stations he would view the stream,
As if he stood bewilder'd in a dream,
Or that some power had chain'd him for a time,
To feel a curse or meditate on crime.

This known, some curious, some in pity went,
And others question'd—' Wretch, dost thou repent ?'
He heard, he trembled, and in fear resign'd
His boat : new terror fill'd his restless mind ; 250
Furious he grew, and up the country ran,
And there they seized him—a distemper'd man :—
Him we received, and to a parish-bed,
Follow'd and cursed, the groaning man was led.

Here when they saw him, whom they used to shu
A lost, lone man, so harass'd and undone ;

A priest too came, to whom his words are told ;
And all the signs they shudder'd to behold.

The priest attending, found he spoke at times
As one alluding to his fears and crimes :
' It was the fall,' he mutter'd, ' I can show 270
The manner how—I never struck a blow : '—
And then aloud—' Unhand me, free my chain ;
On oath, he fell—it struck him to the brain :—
Why ask my father ?—that old man will swear
Against my life ; besides, he wasn't there :—
What, all agreed ?—Am I to die to-day ?—
My Lord, in mercy, give me time to pray.'

Then, as they watch'd him, calmer he became,
And grew so weak he couldn't move his frame,
But murmuring spake,—while they could see and hear 280
The start of terror and the groan of fear ;

See the large dew-beads on his forehead rise,
 And the cold death-drop glaze his sunken eyes ;
 Nor yet he died, but with unwonted force
 Seem'd with some fancied being to discourse :
 He knew not us, or with accustom'd art
 He hid the knowledge, yet exposed his heart ;
 'Twas part confession and the rest defence,
 A madman's tale, with gleams of waking sense.

' I'll tell you all,' he said, ' the very day 290
 When the old man first placed them in my way :
 My father's spirit—he who always tried
 To give me trouble, when he lived and died—
 When he was gone, he could not be content
 To see my days in painful labour spent,
 But would appoint his meetings, and he made
 Me watch at these, and so neglect my trade.

'Twas one hot noon, all silent, still, serene,
 No living being had I lately seen ;
 I paddled up and down and dipp'd my net, 300
 But (such his pleasure) I could nothing get,—
 A father's pleasure, when his toil was done,
 To plague and torture thus an only son !
 And so I sat and look'd upon the stream,
 How it ran on, and felt as in a dream :
 But dream it was not ; no !—I fix'd my eyes
 On the mid-stream and saw the spirits rise ;
 I saw my father on the water stand,
 And hold a thin pale boy in either hand ;

And there they glided ghastly on the top 310
Of the salt flood, and never touch'd a drop :
I would have struck them, but they knew th' intent,
And smiled upon the oar, and down they went.

' Now, from that day, whenever I began
To dip my net, there stood the hard old man—
He and those boys: I humbled me and pray'd
They would be gone ;—they heeded not, but stay'd :
Nor could I turn, nor would the boat go by,
But gazing on the spirits, there was I :
They bade me leap to death, but I was loth to die : 320]
And every day, as sure as day arose,
Would these three spirits meet me ere the close ;
To hear and mark them daily was my doom,
And " Come," they said, with weak, sad voices,
" come."

To row away with all my strength I try'd,
But there were they, hard by me in the tide,
The three unbodied forms—and " Come," still
" come " they cried.

' Fathers should pity—but this old man shook
His hoary locks, and froze me by a look :
Thrice, when I struck them, through the water came 330
A hollow groan, that weaken'd all my frame :
" Father ! " said I, " have mercy : "—He replied,
I know not what—the angry spirit lied,—
" Didst thou not draw thy knife ? " said he :—
'Twas true,

But I had pity and my arm withdrew :
He cried for mercy which I kindly gave,
But he has no compassion in his grave.

‘ There were three places, where they ever rose,—
The whole long river has not such as those,—
Places accursed, where, if a man remain, 340
He’ll see the things which strike him to the brain ;
And there they made me on my paddle lean,
And look at them for hours ;—accursed scene !
When they would glide to that smooth eddy-space,
Then bid me leap and join them in the place ;
And at my groans each little villain sprite
Enjoy’d my pains and vanish’d in delight.

‘ In one fierce summer-day, when my poor brain
Was burning hot and cruel was my pain,
Then came this father-foe, and there he stood 350
With his two boys again upon the flood ;
There was more mischief in their eyes, more glee
In their pale faces when they glared at me :
Still did they force me on the oar to rest,
And when they saw me fainting and oppress’d,
He, with his hand, the old man, scoop’d the flood,
And there came flame about him mix’d with blood ;
He bade me stoop and look upon the place,
Then flung the hot-red liquor in my face ;
Burning it blazed, and then I roar’d for pain, 360
I thought the demons would have turn’d my brain.

' Still there they stood, and forced me to behold
A place of horrors—they cannot be told—
Where the flood open'd, there I heard the shriek
Of tortured guilt—no earthly tongue can speak:
" All days alike ! for ever ! " did they say,
" And unremitted torments every day "—
Yes, so they said :—But here he ceased and gazed
On all around, affrighten'd and amazed ;
And still he tried to speak, and look'd in dread 370
Of frighten'd females gathering round his bed ;
Then dropp'd exhausted and appear'd at rest,
Till the strong foe the vital powers possess'd :
Then with an inward, broken voice he cried,
' Again they come,' and mutter'd as he died.

William Blake (1757-1827)

THE TIGER

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forest of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry ?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes ?
On what wings dare he aspire ?
What the hand dare seize the fire ?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart ? 10
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet ?

What the hammer ? what the chain ?
In what furnace was thy brain ?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp ?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see ?
/ Did He who made the lamb make thee ? 20

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry ?

THE LAMB

Little lamb, who made thee ?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright ;

Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice ?
Little lamb, who made thee ?
Dost thou know who made thee ? 10

Little lamb, I'll tell thee ;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee :
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are callèd by His name.

Little lamb, God bless thee !
Little lamb, God bless thee ! 20

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle ; in such bold ascent

The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage ! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen ; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone 10
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude ;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones !
And to that simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside, 20
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved ;—not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel 30
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)

On man, the heart of man, and human life.

Therefore, although it be a history

Homely and rude, I will relate the same

For the delight of a few natural hearts :

And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake

Of youthful Poets, who among these hills

Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale

40

There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name ;

An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.

His bodily frame had been from youth to age

Of an unusual strength : his mind was keen,

Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,

And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt

And watchful more than ordinary men.

Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,

Of blasts of every tone ; and, oftentimes,

When others heeded not, He heard the South

50

Make subterraneous music, like the noise

Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.

The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock

Bethought him, and he to himself would say,

“ The winds are now devising work for me ! ”

And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives

The traveller to a shelter, summoned him

Up to the mountains : he had been alone

Amid the heart of many thousand mists,

That came to him, and left him, on the heights.

60

So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air ; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed ; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear ;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honourable gain :
Those fields, those hills—what could they less ? had
laid

70

Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house : two wheels she had
Of antique form ; this large, for spinning wool ;
That small, for flax ; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them

80

When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son, 90
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then,
Their labour did not cease ; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk, 100
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the
meal

Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside ; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge, 110
That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp ;

An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn—and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year; had found,
And left, the couple neither gay perhaps 120.
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public symbol of the life 130.
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake ;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named The Evening Star.
Thus living on through such a length of years, 140
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate ; but to Michael's heart

This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail. 150
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy ! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness ; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love, 160
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The Clipping Tree, a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade, 170

With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old ;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut 180
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy ; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock ;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help ;
And for this cause not always, I believe, 190
Receiving from his Father hire of praise ;
Though nought was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts ; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate

That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now ? that from the Boy there came 200
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind :
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again ?

Thus in his father's sight the Boy grew up :
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound 210
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means ;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost. 220
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve ; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. " Isabel," said he,

Two evenings after he had heard the news,
“ I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God’s love
Have we all lived ; yet, if these fields of ours 230
Should pass into a stranger’s hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot ; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I :
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us ; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him ;—but 240
’Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel ; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free ;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know’st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go, 250
And with his kinsman’s help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,

What can be done ? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained ? ”

At this the old Man paused
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence 260
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares :
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas ; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel floored
With marble which he sent from foreign lands. 270
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed :—“ Well, Isabel ! this scheme
These two days has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
—We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger ;—but this hope is a good hope.
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth 280

To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
—If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night.”
Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael’s side, she through the last two nights 290
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, “Thou must not go:
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father, he will die.”
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears, 300
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.
With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do

His utmost for the welfare of the Boy ;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith 310
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over ; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbours round ;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
“ He shall depart to-morrow.” To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length 320
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheepfold ; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked :
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped, 330
And thus the old Man spake to him :—“ My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me : with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part

Of our two histories ; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.—After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls 340
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune ;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed 350
And on the mountains ; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke : among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart ; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, " Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak, 360
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father : and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands ; for, though now old

Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together : here they lived
As all their Forefathers had done ; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth-
To give their bodies to the family mould. 370
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived :
But 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came to me ;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled ; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke, 380
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go."

At this the old Man paused ;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed :
" This was a work for us ; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope ;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale ;—do thou thy part : 390
I will do mine.—I will begin again

With many tasks that were resigned to thee :
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy !
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes ; it should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
To leave me, Luke : thou hast been bound to me 400
Only by links of love : when thou art gone,
What will be left to us !—But I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone
As I requested and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment ; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee : amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived, 410
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here : a covenant
'Twill be between us ; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave.”

The Shepherd ended here ; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid

The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight 420
The old Man's grief broke from him ; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept ;
And to the house together they returned.
—Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell :—with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face ;
And all the neighbours, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight. 430

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing : and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
“ The prettiest letters that were ever seen.”
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on : and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts ; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour 440
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty ; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses : ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love ;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart : 450
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind ; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time 460
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time, 470
He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband : at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.

The Cottage which was named the EVENING STAR
Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood ; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood :—yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door ; and the remains 480
Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

HART-LEAP WELL

The Knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud,
And now, as he approached a vassal's door,
“ Bring forth another horse ! ” he cried aloud.

“ Another horse ! ”—That shout the vassal heard
And saddled his best Steed, a comely grey ;
Sir Walter mounted him ; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes ;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair ; 10
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's Hall,
That as they galloped made the echoes roar ;
But horse and man are vanished, one and all ;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain :
Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain. 20

The Knight hallooed, he cheered and chid them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern ;
But breath and eyesight fail ; and, one by one,
The dogs are stretched among the mountain fern

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race ?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown ?
—This chase it looks not like an earthly chase ;
Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain-side ;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled, 30
Nor will I mention by what death he died ;
But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting, then, he leaned against a thorn ;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy :
He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious feat ;
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned ;
And white with foam as if with cleaving sleet. 40

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretched :
His nostril touched a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had fetched
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
(Never had living man such joyful lot !)
Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and west,
And gazed and gazed upon that darling spot.

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least
Four roods of sheer ascent) Sir Walter found 50
Three several hoof-marks which the hunted Beast
Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, “ Till now
Such sight was never seen by human eyes :
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

“ I’ll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small harbour, made for rural joy;
’Twill be the traveller’s shed, the pilgrim’s cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy. 60

“ A cunning artist will I have to frame
A basin for that fountain in the dell !
And they who do make mention of the same,
From this day forth, shall call it HART-LEAP WELL.

“And, gallant Stag ! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be raised ;
Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.

“And in the summer-time, when days are long,
I will come hither with my Paramour ; 70
And with the dancers and the minstrel’s song
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

“ Till the foundations of the mountains fail
My mansion with its arbour shall endure ;—
The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure !”

Then home he went, and left the Hart stone-dead,
With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring.
—Soon did the Knight perform what he had said ;
And far and wide the fame thereof did ring. 80

Ere thrice the Moon into her port had steered,
A cup of stone received the living well ;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And, near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,—
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter led his wondering Paramour ; 90
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND

The moving accident is not my trade ;
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts :
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts. 100

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanced that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspens at three corners of a square ;
And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine :
And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,—
'The last stone-pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head ;
Half wasted the square mound of tawny green ; 110
So that you just might say, as then I said,
“ Here in old time the hand of man hath been.”

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey ;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one, who was in shepherd's garb attired,
Came up the hollow :—him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then enquired. 120

The Shepherd stopped, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.
“ A jolly place,” said he, “ in times of old !
But something ails it now ; the spot is curst.

“ You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—
Some say that they are beeches, others elms—
These were the bower ; and here a mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms !

“ The harbour does its own condition tell ;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream ; 130
But as to the great Lodge ! you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

“ There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone ;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

“ Some say that here a murder has been done,
And blood cries out for blood : but, for my part,
I’ve guessed, when I’ve been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy Hart. 140

“ What thoughts must through the creature’s brain
have past !
Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,
Are but three bounds—and look, Sir, at this last—
O Master ! it has been a cruel leap.

“ For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race ;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the Hart might have to love this place,
And come and make his death-bed near the well.

“ Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lulled by the fountain in the summer-tide ; 150
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wandered from his mother’s side.

“ In April here beneath the flowering thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing ;
And he perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

“ Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade ;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone ;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone.” 160

“ Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well ;
Small difference lies between thy creed and mine :
This Beast not unobserved by Nature fell ;
His death was mourned by sympathy divine.

“ The Being that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

“ The pleasure-house is dust :—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom ; 170
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

“ She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known ;
But at the coming of the milder day
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

“ One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals ;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.” 180

LONDON, 1802

Milton ! thou shouldst be living at this hour :
England hath need of thee : she is a fen
Of stagnant waters : altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;
Oh ! raise us up, return to us again ;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart :
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea : 10
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802

O Friend ! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, oppressed,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show ; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom !—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest :
The wealthiest man among us is the best :
No grandeur now in nature or in book

Delights us. Rapine; avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore: 10
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE
VENETIAN REPUBLIC

Once did she hold the gorgeous east in fee ;
And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free ;
No guile seduced, no force could violate ;
And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay ; 10
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day :
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great, is passed away.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE.

Earth has not anything to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ; 10
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
And all that mighty heart is lying still !

“ THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US ”

The world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;

It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ; 10
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

YARROW UNVISITED

From Stirling castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled ;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled ;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my "*winsome Marrow*,"
" Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

" Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling, 10
Go back to Yarrow, 'tis their own ;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow !
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

“ There’s Galla Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us ;
And Dryborough, ~~where~~ with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus ; 20
There’s pleasant Tiviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow :
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow ?

“ What’s Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under ?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder.”
—Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn ;
My True-love sighed for sorrow ; 30
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow !

“ Oh ! green,” said I, “ are Yarrow’s holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing !
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,
But we will leave it growing.
O’er hilly path, and open Strath,
We’ll wander Scotland thorough ;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow. 40

“ Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow ;
The swan on still St. Mary’s Lake
Float double, swan and shadow !

We will not see them ; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow ;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There’s such a place as Yarrow.

“ Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!

It must, or we shall rue it :

50

We have a vision’ of our own ;

Ah! why should we undo it ?

The treasured dreams of times long past,

We’ll keep them, winsome Marrow !

For when we’re there, although ’tis fair,

’Twill be another Yarrow!

“ If Care with freezing years should come,

And wandering seem but folly,—

Should we be loth to stir from home,

And yet be melancholy ;

60

Should life be dull, and spirits low,

’Twill soothe us in our sorrow,

That earth has something yet to show,

The bonny holms of Yarrow !”

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET

I

Where art thou, my beloved Son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead ?
Oh find me, prosperous or undone !
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same
That I may rest ; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name ?

II

Seven years, alas ! to have received
No tidings of an only child ;
To have despaired, have hoped, believed,
And been for evermore beguiled ; 10
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss !
I catch at them, and then I miss ;
Was ever darkness like to this ?

III

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold;
Well born, well bred; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold:
If things ensued that wanted grace,

As hath been said, they were not base ; 20
And never blush was on my face.

IV

Ah ! little doth the young-one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power is in his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares !
He knows it not, he cannot guess :
Years to a mother bring distress ;
But do not make her love the less.

V

Neglect me ! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought ; and, being blind, 30
Said, “ Pride shall help me in my wrong :
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed : ” and that is true ;
I’ve wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

VI

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh ! do not dread thy mother’s door ;
Think not of me with grief and pain :
I now can see with better eyes ; 40

And worldly grandeur I despise,
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

VII

Alas ! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight ;
They mount—how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight !
Chains tie us down by land and sea ;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

VIII

Perhaps some dūn^geon hears thee groan, 50
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men ;
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion's den ;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

IX

I look for ghosts ; but none will force
Their way to me : 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead ; 60
For, surely, then I should have sight

Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

X

My apprehensions come in crowds ;
I dread the rustling of the grass ;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass :
I question things, and do not find
One that will answer to my mind ;
And all the world appears unkind.

70

XI

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief :
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my Son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end ;
I have no other earthly friend !

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass !
Reaping and singing by herself ;
Stop here, or gently pass !

Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain ;
O listen ! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands :
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides. 10

Will no one tell me what she sings ?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago :
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day ?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again ? 20

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending ;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending ;—
I listen, motionless and still ;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more. 30

PERSONAL TALK

I

I am not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk,—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight:
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire ; 10
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint under-song.

II

“Yet life,” you say, “ is life ; we have seen and see,
And with a living pleasure we describe ;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe.” 20
Even be it so : yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me !

Children are blest, and powerful ; their world lies
More justly balanced ; partly at their feet,
And part far from them :—sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet ;
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a Slave ; the meanest we can meet !

III

Wings have we,—and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure : wilderness and wood, 30
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world ; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good :
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store.
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear ;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,— 40
The gentle Lady married to the Moor ;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

IV

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine ; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking ; rancour, never sought,

Comes to me not ; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought :
And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably. 50
Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays !
Oh ! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

Sir Walter Scott

ALICE BRAND

I

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

“ O Alice Brand, my native land
Is lost for love of you ;
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do !

“ O Alice, 'twas all for thy locks so bright,
And 'twas all for thine eyes so blue, 10
That on the night of our luckless flight,
Thy brother bold I slew.

“ Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

“ And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughter'd deer,
To keep the cold away.” 20

“ O Richard ! if my brother died,
'Twas but a fatal chance,
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

“ If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we'll say, is the russet grey,
As gay the forest-green.

“ And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land, 30
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand.”

II

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
So blithe Lady Alice is singing ;
On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who wonn'd within the hill,—
Like wind in the porch of a ruin'd church,
His voice was ghostly shrill.

40

“ Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle's screen ?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen ?
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies' fatal green ?

“ Up, Urgan, up ! to yon mortal hie,
For thou wert christen'd man :
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For mutter'd word or ban.

50

“ Lay on him the curse of the wither'd heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye ;
Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
Nor yet find leave to die ' ”

III

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
 Though the birds have still'd their singing ;
The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
 And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
 Before Lord Richard stands, 60
And as he cross'd and bless'd himself,
“ I fear not sign,” quoth the grisly elf,
 “ That is made with bloody hands.”

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
 That woman void of fear,—
“ And if there's blood upon his hand,
 'Tis but the blood of deer.”

“ Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood !
 It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood, 70
 The blood of Ethert Brand.”

Then forward stepp'd she, Alice Brand,
 And made the holy sign,—
“ And if there's blood on Richard's hand,
 A spotless hand is mine.

“ And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
By Him whom Demons fear,
To show us whence thou art thyself,
And what thine errand here ? ”

IV

“ ’Tis merry, ’tis merry, in Fairy-land, 80
When fairy birds are singing,
When the court doth ride by their monarch’s side,
With bit and bridle ringing :

“ And gaily shines the Fairy-land—
But all is glistening show,
Like the idle gleam that December’s beam
Can dart on ice and snow.

“ And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconstant shape,
Who now like knight and lady seem, 90
And now like dwarf and ape.

“ It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy King has power,
That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
And ’twixt life and death, was snatch’d away
To the joyless Elfin bower ;

“ But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,
I might regain my mortal mould,
As fair a form as thine.” 100

She cross'd him once—she cross'd him twice—
That lady was so brave ;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She cross'd him thrice, that lady bold ;
—He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mould,
Her brother, Ethert Brand !

—Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing, 110
But merrier were they in Dunfermline grey
When all the bells were ringing.

S. T. Coleridge

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

ARGUMENT.

How a Ship having first sailed to the Equator, was driven by Storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole ; how the Ancient Mariner cruelly, and in

*contempt of the laws of hospitality, killeth a sea-bird,
and how he was followed by many strange judgments,
and in what manner he came back to his own country.*

PART I.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
“ By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp’st thou me ?

“ The Bridegroom’s doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin ;
The guests are met, the feast is set :
May’st hear the merry din.”

He holds him with his skinny hand,
“ There was a ship,” quoth he. 10
“ Hold off ! unhand me, greybeard loon ! ”
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years’ child :
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone :
He cannot choose but hear ;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner. 20

“ The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

“ The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he !
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

“ Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—”
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

30

The Bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she ;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear ;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

40

“ And now the storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong :
He struck with his o’ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

“ With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward ay we fled. 50

“ And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold :
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

“ And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen :
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

“ The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around : 60
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound !

“ At length did cross an Albatross :
Through the fog it came ;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

“ It ate the food it ne’er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit ;
The helmsman steered us through ! 70

“ And a good south wind sprung up behind ;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner’s hollo !

“ In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine ;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moonshine.”

“ God save thee, ancient Mariner !
From the fiends, that plague thee thus !— 80
Why look’st thou so ? ”—“ With my cross-bow
I shot the ALBATROSS.

PART II.

“ The Sun now rose upon the right :
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

“ And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariner’s hollo ! 90

“ And I had done an hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe :
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow !

“ Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist :
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist. 100
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

“ The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free ;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

“ Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be ;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea ! 110

“ All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand
No bigger than the Moon.

" Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

" Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink ;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink. 120

" The very deep did rot : O Christ !
That ever this should be !
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

" About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night ;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white. 130

" And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so,
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

" And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root ;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

“ Ah ! well-a-day ! what evil looks
Had I from old and young !
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung. 140

PART III.

“ There passed a weary time Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time ! a weary time !
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

“ At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist ;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist. 150

“ A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist !
And still it neared and neared :
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

“ With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could not laugh nor wail ;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood !
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, a sail ! a sail ! 160

“ With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call :
Gramercy ! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
’As they were drinking all.

“ See ! See ! (I cried) she tacks no more !
Hither to work us weal ;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel !

170

“ The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was wellnigh done !
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

“ And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven’s Mother send us grace !)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

180

“ Alas ! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears !
Are those *her* sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossamers ?

“ Are those *her* ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate ?
And is that Woman all her crew ?
Is that a DEATH ? and are there two ?
Is DEATH that woman's mate ?

“ Her lips were red, her looks were free, 190
Her locks were yellow as gold :
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The nightmare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

“ The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
' The game is done ! I've won, I've won ! '
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

“ The Sun's rim dips ; the stars rush out :
At one stride comes the dark ; 200
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

“ We listened and looked sideways up !
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip !
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white ;

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest ! 230
This body dropt not down.

“ Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea !
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

“ The many men, so beautiful !
And they all dead did lie :
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on ; and so did I.

“ I looked upon the rotting sea, 240
And drew my eyes away ;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

“ I looked to Heaven, and tried to pray ;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

“ I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat ;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky 250
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

“ The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they :
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

“ An orphan’s curse would drag to Hell
A Spirit from on high ;
But oh ! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man’s eye !
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

260

“ The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide :
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

“ Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread ;
But where the ship’s huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt away
A still and awful red.

270

“ Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes :
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

“ Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire :
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam ; and every track 280
Was a flash of golden fire.

“ O happy living things ! no tongue
Their beauty might declare :
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware :
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

“ The selfsame moment I could pray ;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank 290
Like lead into the sea.

PART V.

“ Oh sleep ! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole !
To Mary Queen the praise be given !
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

“ The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew ;
And when I awoke, it rained. 300

“ My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank ;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

“ I moved, and could not feel my limbs :
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

“ And soon I heard a roaring wind :
It did not come anear ; 310
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

“ The upper air burst into life !
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about !
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

“ And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge ;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud ; 320
The Moon was at its edge.

“ The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side :
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

“ The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on !
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

330

“ They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes ;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

“ The helmsman steered, the ship moved on ;
Yet never a breeze up blew ;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do ;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.”

340

“ The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee :
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me.”

“ I fear thee, ancient Mariner ! ”
“ Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest !
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest :

“ For when it dawned—they dropped their arms, 350
And clustered round the mast ;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

“ Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun ;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

“ Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the skylark sing ;
Sometimes all little birds that are, 360
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning !

“ And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute ;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the Heavens be mute.

“ It ceased ; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June, 370
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

“ Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

“ Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

380

“ The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she ’gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

“ Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoond.

390

“ How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

“ ‘ Is it he ? ’ quoth one, ‘ Is this the man ?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

400

“ ‘ The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.’

“ The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honeydew :
Quoth he, ‘ The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.’

PART VI.

FIRST VOICE.

“ ‘ But tell me, tell me ! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast ?
What is the OCEAN doing ? ’

410

SECOND VOICE.

“ ‘ Still as a slave before his lord,
The OCEAN hath no blast ;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

“ ‘ If he may know which way to go ;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see ! how graciously
She looketh down on him.’ 420

FIRST VOICE.

“ ‘ But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind ? ’

SECOND VOICE.

‘ The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

“ ‘ Fly, brother, fly ! more high, more high !
Or we shall be belated :
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner’s trance is abated.’

“ I woke, and we were sailing on 430
As in a gentle weather :
’Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high ;
The dead men stood together.

“ All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter :
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

“ The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away :

I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

440

“ And now the spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

“ Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head ;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

“ But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made :
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

“ It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

“ Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

“ Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?

“ We drifted o’er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God ! 470
Or let me sleep alway.

“ The harbour bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn !
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

“ The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock :
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

“ And the bay was white with silent light, 480
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

“ A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were :
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ ! what saw I there !

“ Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood !
A man all light, a seraph-man, 490
On every corse there stood.

“ This seraph-band, each waved his hand :
It was a heavenly sight !
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light ;

“ This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice ; but oh ! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

“ But soon I heard the dash of oars, 500
I heard the Pilot's cheer ;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

“ The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast :
Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

“ I saw a third—I heard his voice :
It is the Hermit good !
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He’ll shrieve my soul, he’ll wash away
The Albatross’s blood.

510

PART VII.

“ This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears !
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

“ He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump :
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

520

“ The skiff-boat neared : I heard them talk,
‘ Why, this is strange, I trow !
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now ? ’

“ ‘ Strange, by my faith ! ’ the Hermit said—
‘ And they answered not our cheer !
The planks look warped ! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere !
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

530

“ ‘ Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along ;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf’s young.’

“ ‘ Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look—’
(The Pilot made reply)

‘ I am a-feared.’—‘ Push on, push on ! ’ 540
Said the Hermit cheerily.

“ The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred ;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

“ Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread :
It reached the ship, it split the bay ;
The ship went down like lead.

“ Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound, 550
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat ;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot’s boat.

“ Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round ;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

“ I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked 560
And fell down in a fit :
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

“ I took the oars : the Pilot’s boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
‘ Ha! ha!’ quoth he, ‘ full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.’

“ And now, all in my own countree, 570
I stood on the firm land !
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

“ ‘ O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man !’
The Hermit crossed his brow.
‘ Say quick,’ quoth he, ‘ I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou ?’

“Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale ;
And then it left me free.

“ Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

“ I pass, like night, from land to land ;
I have strange power of speech ;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me :
To him my tale I teach.

“ What loud uproar bursts from that door !
The wedding-guests are there :
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are :
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer !

“ O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea :
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be. 600

“ O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company !—

“ To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay !

“ Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

610

“ He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small ;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.”

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone : and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

620

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn :
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

Lord Byron

THE ISLES OF GREECE

FROM *Don Juan*, Canto III.

1

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece !
 Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
 Where grew the arts of war and peace,
 Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung !
 Eternal summer gilds them yet,
 But all, except their sun, is set.

2

The Scian and the Teian muse,
 The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
 Have found the fame your shores refuse:
 Their place of birth alone is mute 10
 To sounds which echo further west
 Than your sires' " Islands of the Blest."

3

The mountains look on Marathon—
 And Marathon looks on the sea ;
 And musing there an hour alone,
 I dream'd that Greece might still be free ;

For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

4

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis ; 20
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations ;—all were his !
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set where were they ?

5

And where are they ? and where art thou,
My country ? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—
The heroic bosom beats no more !
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine ? 30

6

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face ;
For what is left the poet here ?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

7

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest ?

Must *we* but blush ?—Our fathers bled.

Earth ! render back from out thy breast

A remnant of our Spartan dead !

40

Of the three hundred grant but three,

To make a new Thermopylæ !

8

What, silent still ? and silent all ?

Ah ! no ;—the voices of the dead

Sound like a distant torrent's fall,

And answer, " Let one living head,

But one arise,—we come, we come ! "

'Tis but the living who are dumb.

9

In vain—in vain : strike other chords ;

Fill high the cup with Samian wine !

50

Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,

And shed the blood of Scio's vine !

Hark ! rising to the ignoble call—

How answers each bold Bacchanal !

10

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet ;

Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone ?

Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one ?
You have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave ? 60

11

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !
We will not think of themes like these !
It made Anacreon's song divine ;
He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant ; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend ;
That tyrant was Miltiades !
Oh ! that the present hour would lend 70
Another despot of the kind !
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore ;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

14

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—

They have a king who buys and sells ; 80

In native swords, and native ranks,

The only hope of courage dwells:

But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,

Would break your shield, however broad.

15

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !

Our virgins dance beneath the shade—

I see their glorious black eyes shine ;

But gazing on each glowing maid,

My own the burning tear-drop laves,

To think such breasts must suckle slaves. 90

16

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,

Where nothing, save the waves and I,

May hear our mutual murmurs sweep ;

There, swan-like, let me sing and die :

A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—

Dash down yon cup of Samian wine !

THE NIGHT BEFORE QUATRE-BRAS

FROM *Childe Harold, Canto III.*

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men ;
A thousand hearts beat happily ; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell ;
But hush ! hark ! a deep sound strikes like a rising
knell !

Did ye not hear it ?—No ; 'twas but the wind, 10
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street ;
On with the dance ! let joy be unconfined ;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—
But bark !—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat ;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before !
Arm ! Arm ! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar !

Within a window'd niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain ; he did hear 20
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear ;

And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell ;
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago 30
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness ;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated ; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise !

And there was mounting in hot haste : the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war ; 40
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar ;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star ;
While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips—"The foe !
they come ! they come !"

And wild and high the "Cameron's gathering" rose !
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes :—
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill ! But with the breath which fills 50
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's
ears !

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave, alas !
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow 60
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope shall moulder cold and low.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day
Battle's magnificently stern array !

The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is cover'd thick with other clay, 70
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent !

P. B. Shelley

“ IN THE GREAT MORNING OF THE WORLD ”

FROM *Hellas*

In the great morning of the world,
The spirit of God with might unfurl'd
The flag of Freedom over Chaos,
 And all its banded anarchs fled,
Like vultures frighted from Imaus
 Before an earthquake's tread.—
So from Time's tempestuous dawn
Freedom's splendour burst and shone :—
Thermopylae and Marathon
Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted, 10
 The springing fire. The winged glory
On Philippi half-alighted,
 Like an eagle on a promontory.
Its unwearied wings could fan
The quenchless ashes of Milan.
From age to age, from man to man,

It lived ; and lit from land to land
Florence, Albion, Switzerland.
Then night fell ; and, as from night,
Re-assuming fiery flight, 20
From the West swift Freedom came,
Against the course of Heaven and doom,
A second sun array'd in flame,
To burn, to kindle, to illume.
From far Atlantis its young beams
Chased the shadows and the dreams.
France, with all her sanguine streams,
Hid, but quench'd it not ; again
Through clouds its shafts of glory rain
From utmost Germany to Spain. 30
As an eagle fed with morning
Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,
When she seeks her æry hanging
In the mountain-cedar's hair,
And her brood expect the clanging
Of her wings through the wild air,
Sick with famine :—Freedom so
To what of Greece remaineth now
Returns ; her hoary ruins glow
Like Orient mountains lost in day ; 40
Beneath the safety of her wings
Her renovated nurselings play,
And in the naked lightnings
Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.

Let Freedom leave,—where'er she flies,
A Desert, or a Paradise :
Let the beautiful and the brave
Share her glory, or a grave.

“ RARELY, RARELY COMEST THOU ”

Rarely, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight !
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night ?
Many a weary night and day
'Tis since thou art fled away.

How shall ever one like me
Win thee back again ?
With the joyous and the free
Thou wilt scoff at pain.
Spirit false ! thou hast forgot
All but those who need thee not.

10

As a lizard with the shade
Of a trembling leaf,
Thou with sorrow art dismay'd ;
Even the sighs of grief
Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

Let me set my mournful ditty
 To a merry measure, 20
Thou wilt never come for pity,
 Thou wilt come for pleasure,
Pity then will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

I love all that thou lovest,
 Spirit of Delight !
The fresh Earth in new leaves drest,
 And the starry night ;
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born. 30

I love snow, and all the forms
 Of the radiant frost ;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,
 Every thing almost
Which is Nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery.

I love tranquil solitude,
 And such society
As is quiet, wise and good ;
 Between thee and me 40
What difference? but thou dost possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

I love Love—though he has wings,
And like light can flee,
But above all other things,
Spirit, I love thee—
Thou art love and life ! O come,
Make once more my heart thy home.

TO NIGHT

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night !
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight !

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
Star-inwrought !
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day ;
Kiss her until she be wearied out,
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand—
Come, long sought !

When I arose and saw the dawn,

I sighed for thee ;

When light rode high, and the dew was gone,

And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,

And the weary Day turned to his rest,

Lingering like an unloved guest,

20

I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,

Wouldst thou me ?

Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,

Murmured like a noon-tide bee,

Shall I nestle near thy side ?

Wouldst thou me ?—And I replied,

No, not thee.

Death will come when thou art dead,

Soon, too soon—

30

Sleep will come when thou art fled ;

Of neither would I ask the boon

I ask of thee, beloved Night—

Swift be thine approaching flight,

Come soon, soon !

THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,

From the seas and the streams ;

I bear light shade for the leaves when laid

In their noon-day dreams.

From my wings are shaken the dews that waken

The sweet birds every one,

When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,

As she dances about the sun.

I wield the flail of the lashing hail,

And whiten the green plains under.

10

And then again I dissolve it in rain,

And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,

And their great pines groan aghast ;

And all the night 'tis my pillow white,

While I sleep in the arms of the blast.

Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,

Lightning my pilot sits ;

In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,

It struggles and howls at fits ;

20

Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,

This pilot is guiding me,

Lured by the love of the genii that move

In the depths of the purple sea ;

Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,

Over the lakes and the plains,

Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains :
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains. 30

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead ;
As on the jag on a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardours of rest and of love, 40
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn ;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only th' angels hear, 50
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer ;

And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
 Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
 Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
 Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
 And the moon's with a girdle of pearl ; 60
The volcanoes are dim; and the stars reel and swim,
 When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
 Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,—
 The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
 With hurricane, fire and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
 Is the million-coloured bow : 70
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
 While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
 And the nursling of the Sky ;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;
 I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain,
 The pavilion of Heaven is bare,

And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air, 80
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

OZYMANDIAS OF EGYPT

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed
And on the pedestal these words appear:
' My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: 10
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair !
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

John Keats**LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI**

' O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering ?
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone ?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew, 10
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.'

' I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone,
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan. 20

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long.
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said—
“ I love thee true ! ”

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sigh'd full sore, 30
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd—ah ! woe betide !
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hill's side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all ;
They cried—“ La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall ! ” 40

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

ODE TO AUTUMN

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves
run ;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease, 10
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spare the next swath and all its twined flowers :
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook ; 20
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring ? Ay, where are they ?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barréd clouds bloom the soft-dying day
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river-sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ; 30
Hedge-cricket sing ; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft ;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

The poetry of earth is never dead :
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead ;
That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead
In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights ; for when tired out with fun
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never :
On a lone winter evening, when the frost

Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

“TO ONE WHO HAS BEEN LONG IN
CITY PENT”

To one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment ?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by,
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

THE TERROR OF DEATH

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high-piléd books, in charact'ry
Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd grain ;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour !
That I shall never look upon thee more, 10
Never have relish in the fairy power
Of unreflecting love—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S
HOMER

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen ;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne ;

Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold :
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies

When a new planet swims into his ken ;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes

He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Thomas Hood

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS

One more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death !

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care ;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair !

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing ;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully ;
 Think of her mournfully,
 Gently and humanly ;
 Not of the stains of her,
 All that remains of her
 Now is pure womanly.

20

Make no deep scrutiny
 Into her mutiny
 Rash and undutiful :
 Past all dishonour
 Death has left on her
 Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers.
 One of Eve's family—
 Wipe those poor lips of hers
 Oozing so clammily.

30

Loop up her tresses
 Escaped from the comb,
 Her fair auburn tresses ;
 Whilst wonderment guesses
 Where was her home ?

Who was her father ?
 Who was her mother ?
 Had she a sister ?
 Had she a brother ?

Or was there a dearer one 40
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other ?

Alas ! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun !
Oh ! it was pitiful !
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none !

Sisterly, Brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly 50
Feelings had changed :
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence ;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement, 60
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver ;

But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river :
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurl'd—
Anywhere, anywhere,
Out of the world !

70

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute man !
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can !
Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care ;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair !

80

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently,—kindly,—
Smooth and compose them :
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly !

Dreadfully staring 90
Thro' muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing,
Fix'd on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurr'd by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.—
Cross her hands humbly, 100
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast !

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour !

DEATH'S RAMBLE

One day the dreary old King of Death
Inclined for some sport with the carnal,
So he tied a pack of darts on his back,
And quietly stole from his charnel,

His head was bald of flesh and of hair,
His body was lean and lank,
His joints at each stir made a crack, and the cur
Took a gnaw, by the way, at his shank.

And what did he do with his deadly darts,
This goblin of grisly bone ? 10
He dabbled and spill'd man's blood, and he kill'd
Like a butcher that kills his own.

The first he slaughter'd it made him laugh
(For the man was a coffin-maker)
To think how the mutes, and men in black suits,
Would mourn for an undertaker.

Death saw two Quakers sitting at church ;
Quoth he, " We shall not differ."
And he let them alone, like figures of stone,
For he could not make them stiffer. 20

He saw two duellists going to fight,
In fear they could not smother ;
And he shot one through at once—for he knew
They never would shoot each other.

He met a coachman driving his coach
And he gave a snore infernal ;
Said Death, " He may keep his breath, for his sleep
Can never be more eternal."

He met a coachman driving his coach
So slow, that his fare grew sick ; 30
But he let him stray on his tedious way,
For Death only wars on the *quick*.

Death saw a toll-man taking a toll,
In the spirit of his fraternity ;
But he knew that sort of man would extort,
Though summon'd to all eternity.

He found an author writing his life,
But he let him write no further ;
For Death, who strikes whenever he likes,
Is jealous of all self-murder ! 40

Death saw a patient that pulled out his purse,
And a doctor that took the sum ;
But he let them be—for he knew that the “ fee ”
Was a prelude to “ faw ” and “ fum ! ”

He met a dustman ringing a bell,
And he gave him a mortal thrust ;
For himself, by law, since Adam's flaw,
Is contractor for all our dust.

He saw a sailor mixing his grog,
And he mark'd him out for slaughter ; 50
For on water he scarcely had cared for Death,
And never on rum-and-water.

Death saw two players playing at cards,
But the game wasn't worth a dump,
For he quickly laid them flat with a spade,
To wait for the final trump!

Lord Tennyson

SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel :
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

10

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall !
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall :

But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill ;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

20

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns :
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;
I hear a voice but none are there ;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound between.

30

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark ;
I leap on board : no helmsman steers :
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light !
Three angels bear the holy Grail :

40

With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go, 50
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail ;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height ;
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields. 60

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear ;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams ;

And, stricken by an angel's hand,
 This mortal armour that I wear, 70
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
 Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
 And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
 Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
 Wings flutter, voices hover clear :
" O just and faithful knight of God !
 Ride on ! the prize is near." 80
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
 Until I find the holy Grail.

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel : I will drink

Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades 10
Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known ; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met ;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades 20
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains : but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things ; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire 30
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—

Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail 40
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port ; the vessel puffs her sail :
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought
with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old ;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil : 50
Death closes all : but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :
The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths 60
Of all the western stars, until I die.

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we are ;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. 70

SONG OF THE LOTOS-EATERS

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Then tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful
 skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness ?
All things have rest : why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm
Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,
' There is no joy but calm !'
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of
things ?

III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.

All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life ; ah, why
Should life all labour be ?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last ?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil ? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream !
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;

To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass !

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd change :
For surely now our household hearths are cold :
Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle ?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile :
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There is confusion worse than death,

Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the
pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-
dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to ~~starboard~~^{port}, roll'd to ~~larboard~~^{starboard}, when the surge
was seething free,

Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-
fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined

On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.

For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are
hurl'd

Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are
lightly curl'd

Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming
world :

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring
deeps and fiery sands,

Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,
and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful
song

Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of
wrong,

Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong ;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the
soil,

Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil ;

Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd
down in hell

Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel,
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the
shore

Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave
and oar ;

Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander
more.

DORA

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at them
And often thought, ' I'll make them man and wife.'
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd toward William : but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day

When Allan call'd his son, and said, ' My son :

I married late, but I would wish to see

10

My grandchild on my knees before I die :

And I have set my heart upon a match.

Now therefore look to Dora ; she is well
To look to ; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter : he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands ; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora : take her for your wife ;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,
For many years.' But William answer'd short : 20
' I cannot marry Dora ; by my life,
I will not marry Dora.' Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said :
' You will not, boy ! you dare to answer thus !
But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it ;
Consider, William : take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish ;
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again.' 30
But William answer'd madly ; bit his lips
And broke away. The more he look'd at her
The less he liked her ; and his ways were harsh ;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields ;
And half in love, and half spite, he woo'd and wed
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd
His niece and said : ' My girl, I love you well ; 40

But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law.'
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
'It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change!'

And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William; then distresses came on him;
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save, 50
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:

'I have obey'd my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone, 60
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan I am come to you:
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest: let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone.'

And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound 70
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not ; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child ;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart fail'd her ; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound ;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers 80
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said : ' Where were you yesterday ?
Whose child is that ? What are you doing here ? '
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, ' This is William's child ! '
' And did I not,' said Allan, ' did I not
Forbid you, Dora ? ' Dora said again : 90
' Do with me as you will, but take the child
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone ! '
And Allan said, ' I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you !
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared

To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy ;
But go you hence, and never see me more.'

So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell 100
At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,
Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down
And wept in secret ; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise 110
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
And Dora said, ' My uncle took the boy ;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you :
He says that he will never see me more.'
Then answer'd Mary, ' This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself :
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother ; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home : 120
And I will beg of him to take thee back :
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,

And work for William's child until he grows
Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd

Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
The door was off the latch : they peep'd, and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks, 130
Like one that loved him : and the lad stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in : but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her :
And Allan set him down, and Mary said :
 ' O father !—if you let me call you so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child ; but now I come
For Dora : take her back ; she loves you well. 140
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men ; for I ask'd him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me—
I had been a patient wife : but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus :
 “ God bless him ! ” he said, “ and may he never know
The troubles I have gone thro' ! ” Then he turn'd
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am !
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight 150

His father's memory ; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before.'

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room ;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—

' I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd
my son.

I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.
May God forgive me !—I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children.'

Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times. 160
And all the man was broken with remorse ;
And all his love came back a hundredfold ;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child
Thinking of William.

So those four abode
Within one house together ; and as years
Went forward, Mary took another mate ;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

ENOCH ARDEN

Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm ;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands ;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster ; then a moulder'd church; and higher

A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill ;
 And high in heaven behind it a gray down
 With Danish barrows ; and a hazelwood,
 By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
 Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago, 10
 Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
 The prettiest little damsel in the port,
 And Philip Ray the miller's only son,
 And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
 Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd
 Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
 Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
 Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats updrawn ;
 And built their castles of dissolving sand
 To watch them overflow'd, or following up 20
 And flying the white breaker, daily left
 The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff :
 In this the children play'd at keeping house.
 Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,
 While Annie still was mistress ; but at times
 Enoch would hold possession for a week :
 ' This is my house and this my little wife.'
 ' Mine too ' said Philip ' turn and turn about : '
 When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-made 30

Was master : then would Philip, his blue eyes
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,
Shriek out ' I hate you, Enoch,' and at this
The little wife would weep for company,
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,
And the new warmth of life's ascending sun
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart
On that one girl ; and Enoch spoke his love, 40
But Philip loved in silence ; and the girl
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him :
But she loved Enoch ; tho' she knew it not,
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
A purpose evermore before his eyes,
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
To purchase his own boat, and make a home
For Annie : and so prosper'd that at last
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe 50
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year
On board a merchantman, and made himself
Full sailor ; and he thrice had pluck'd a life
From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas :
And all men look'd upon him favourably :
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May

He purchased his own boat, and made a home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up
The narrow street that clamber'd toward the mill. 60

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,
The younger people making holiday,
With bag and sack and basket, great and small,
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd
(His father lying sick and needing him)
An hour behind ; but as he climb'd the hill,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,
His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face 70
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read his doom ;
Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,
And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
Crept down into the hollows of the wood ;
There, while the rest were loud in merry-making,
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells, 80
And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,
Seven happy years of health and competence,
And mutual love and honourable toil ;

With children ; first a daughter. In him woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish
To save all earnings to the uttermost,
And give his child a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or hers ; a wish renew'd,
When two years after came a boy to be
The rosy idol of her solitudes, 90
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,
Or often journeying landward ; for in truth
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-spoil
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales,
Not only to the market-cross were known,
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,
And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering. 100

Then came a change, as all things human change.
Ten miles to northward of the narrow port
Open'd a larger haven : thither used
Enoch at times to go by land or sea ;
And once when there, and clambering on a mast
In harbour, by mischance he slipt and fell :
A limb was broken when they lifted him ;
And while he lay recovering there, his wife
Bore him another son, a sickly one :
Another hand crept too across his trade 110

Taking her bread and theirs : and on him fell,
Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,
To see his children leading evermore
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
And her, he loved, a beggar : then he pray'd
'Save them from this, whatever comes to me.'
And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance, 120
Came, for he knew the man and valued him,
Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go ?
There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the place ?
And Enoch all at once assented to it,
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd
No graver than as when some little cloud
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun, 130
And isles a light in the offing : yet the wife—
When he was gone—the children—what to do ?
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans ;
To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well—
How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her !
He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse—
And yet to sell her—then with what she brought

Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth in trade
With all that seamen needed or their wives—
So might she keep the house while he was gone. 140
Should he not trade himself out yonder ? go
This voyage more than once ? yea twice or thrice—
As oft as needed—last, returning rich,
Become the master of a larger craft,
With fuller profits lead an easier life.
Have all his pretty young ones educated,
And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all :
Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born. 150
Forward she started with a happy cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his arms ;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,
Appraised his weight and fondled father-like,
But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his will :
Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear, 160
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared

For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in vain ;
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his hand
To fit their little streetward sitting-room 170
With shelf and corner for the goods and stores.
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd and rang,
Till this was ended, and his careful hand,—
The space was narrow,—having order'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs
Her blossom or her seedling, paused and he,
Who needs would work for Annie to the last, 180
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,
Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter to him.
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes
Whatever came to him ; and then he said

‘ Annie, this voyage by the grace of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,
For I’ll be back, my girl, before you know it.’
Then lightly rocking baby’s cradle ‘ and he,
This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—
Nay—for I love him all the better for it—
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,
And make him merry, when I come home again.
Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go.’

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,
And almost hoped herself ; but when he turn'd
The current of his talk to graver things
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
On providence and trust in Heaven, she heard,
Heard and not heard him ; as the village girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke ‘ O Enoch, you are wise ; 210
And yet for all your wisdom well know I
That I shall look upon your face no more.’

‘ Well then,’ said Enoch, ‘ I shall look on yours. Annie, the ship I sail in passes here

(He named the day) get you a seaman's glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears.'

But when the last of those last moments came,
' Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,
Look to the babes, and till I come again
Keep everything shipshape, for I must go. 220
And fear no more for me ; or if you fear
Cast all your cares on God ; that anchor holds.
Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning ? if I flee to these
Can I go from Him ? and the sea is His,
The sea is His : He made it.'

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones ;
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness, 230
When Annie would have raised him Enoch said
' Wake him not ; let him sleep ; how should the child
Remember this ? ' and kiss'd him in his cot.
But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt
A tiny curl, and gave it : this he kept
Thro' all his future ; but now hastily caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She when the day, that Enoch mention'd, came,
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain : perhaps

She could not fix the glass to suit her eye ; 240
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous ;
She saw him not : and while he stood on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for him ;
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with his,
But throve not in her trade, not being bred
To barter, nor compensating the want
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies, 250
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
And still foreboding ' what would Enoch say ? '
For more than once, in days of difficulty
And pressure, had she sold her wares for less
Than what she gave in buying what she sold :
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it ; and thus,
Expectant of that news which never came,
Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born and grew 260
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it
With all a mother's care : nevertheless,
Whether her business often call'd her from it,
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,
Or means to pay the voice who best could tell

What most it needed—howso'er it was,
After a lingering,—ere she was aware,—
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it, 270
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her peace
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her),
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.
' Surely,' said Philip, ' I may see her now,
May be some little comfort ; ' therefore went,
Past thro' the solitary room in front,
Paused for a moment at an inner door,
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,
Enter'd ; but Annie, seated with her grief,
Fresh from the burial of her little one, 280
Cared not to look on any human face,
But turn'd her own toward the wall and wept.
Then Philip standing up said falteringly
' Annie, I came to ask a favour of you.'

He spoke ; the passion in her moan'd reply
' Favour from one so sad and so forlorn
As I am ! ' half abash'd him ; yet unask'd,
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
He set himself beside her, saying to her :

' I came to speak to you of what he wish'd, 290
Enoch, your husband : I have ever said

You chose the best among us—a strong man :
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.
And wherefore did he go this weary way,
And leave you lonely ? not to see the world—
For pleasure ?—nay, but for wherewithal
To give his babes a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or yours ; that was his wish.
And if he come again, vext will he be 300
To find the precious morning hours were lost.
And it would vex him even in his grave,
If he could know his babes were running wild
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie, now—
Have we not known each other all our lives ?
I do beseech you by the love you bear
Him and his children not to say me nay—
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again
Why then he shall repay me—if you will,
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do. 310
Now let me put the boy and girl to school :
This is the favour that I came to ask.'

Then Annie with her brows against the wall
Answer'd ' I cannot look you in the face ;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke me down ;
And now I think your kindness breaks me down ;
But Enoch lives ; that is borne in on me :

He will repay you : money can be repaid ;
Not kindness such as yours.'

And Philip ask'd 320

' Then you will let me, Annie ? '

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,
And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,
'Then calling down a blessing on his head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,
And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
And bought them needful books, and every way,
Like one who does his duty by his own, 330
Made himself theirs ; and tho' for Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,
The late and early roses from his wall,
Or conies from the down, and now and then,
With some pretext of fineness in the meal
To save the offence of charitable, flour
From his tall mill that whistled on the waste. 340

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind :
Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude

Light on a broken word to thank him with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all ;
From distant corners of the street they ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily ;
Lords of his house and of his mill were they ;
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him 350
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd
As Enoch lost ; for Enoch seem'd to them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where : and so ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd
To go with others, nutting to the wood, 360
And Annie would go with them ; then they begg'd
For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too :
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found ; and saying to him
' Come with us, Father Philip ' he denied :
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,
For was not Annie with them ? And they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began 370

To feather toward the hollow, all her force
Fail'd her ; and sighing, ' Let me rest ' she said ;
So Philip rested with her well-content ;
While all the younger ones with jubilant cries
Broke from their elders, and tumultuously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge
To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the wood. 380

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
He crept into the shadow : at last he said,
Lifting his honest forehead, ' Listen, Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in the wood.
Tired, Annie ? ' for she did not speak a word.
' Tired ? ' but her face had fall'n upon her hands ;
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
' The ship was lost,' he said, ' the ship was lost ! 390
No more of that ! why should you kill yourself
And make them orphans quite ? ' And Annie said
' I thought not of it : but—I know not why—
Their voices make me feel so solitary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.
' Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,

And it has been upon my mind so long,
That tho' I know not when it first came there,
I know that it will out at last. O Annie,
It is beyond all hope, against all chance, 400
That he who left you ten long years ago
Should still be living ; well then—let me speak :
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help :
I cannot help you as I wish to do
Unless—they say that women are so quick—
Perhaps you know what I would have you know—
I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
A father to your children : I do think
They love me as a father : I am sure
That I love them as if they were mine own ; 410
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
That after all these sad uncertain years,
We might be still as happy as God grants
To any of His creatures. Think upon it :
I'or I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,
No burthen, save my care for you and yours :
And we have known each other all our lives,
And I have loved you longer than you know.' .
Then answer'd Annie ; tenderly she spoke :
' You have been as God's good angel in our house. 420
God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
Philip, with something happier than myself.
Can one love twice ? can you be ever loved
As Enoch was ? what is it that you ask ? '

' I am content ' he answer'd ' to be loved
A little after Enoch.' ' O ' she cried,
Scared as it were, ' dear Philip, wait a while :
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long :
Surely I shall be wiser in a year :
O wait a little ! ' Philip sadly said
' Annie, as I have waited all my life
I well may wait a little.' ' Nay ' she cried
' I am bound : you have my promise—in a year :
Will you not bide your year as I bide mine ? '
And Philip answer'd ' I will bide my year.'

430

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day
Pass from the Danish barrow overhead ;
Then fearing night and chill for Annie, rose
And sent his voice beneath him thro' the wood.
Up came the children laden with their spoil ;
Then all descended to the port, and there
At Annie's door he paused and gave his hand,
Saying gently ' Annie, when I spoke to you,
That was your hour of weakness. I was wrong,
I am always bound to you, but you are free.'
Then Annie weeping answer'd ' I am bound.'

440

She spoke ; and in one moment as it were,
While yet she went about her household ways,

450

Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,
That he had loved her longer than she knew,
That autumn into autumn flash'd again,
And there he stood once more before her face,
Claiming her promise. ' Is it a year ? ' she ask'd.
' Yes, if the nuts ' he said—' be ripe again :
' Come out and see.' But she—she put him off—
So much to look to—such a change—a month—
Give her a month—she knew that she was bound—
A month—no more. Then Philip with his eyes 460
Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,
' Take your own time, Annie, take your own time.'
And Annie could have wept for pity of him ;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,
Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,
Till half-another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost, 470
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but trifle with her ;
Some that she but held off to draw him on ;
And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,
As simple folk that knew not their own minds ;
And one, in whom all evil fancies clung
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly

Would hint at worse in either. Her own son
 Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish ;
 But evermore the daughter prest upon her 480
 To wed the man so dear to all of them
 And lift the household out of poverty ;
 And Philip's rosy face contracting grew
 Careworn and wan ; and all these things fell on her
 Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
 That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly
 Pray'd for a sign ' my Enoch is he gone ? '
 Then compass'd round by the blind wall of night
 Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,
 Started from bed, and struck herself a light, 490
 Then desperately seized the holy Book,
 Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
 Suddenly put her finger on the text,
 ' Under the palm-tree.' That was nothing to her :
 No meaning there : she closed the Book and slept :
 When lo ! her Enoch sitting on a height,
 Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun :
 ' He is gone,' she thought, ' he is happy, he is
 singing
 Hosanna in the highest : yonder shines
 The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms 500
 Whereof the happy people strowing cried
 " Hosanna in the highest ! " ' Here she woke,

Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him
‘ There is no reason why we should not wed.’
‘ Then for God’s sake,’ he answer’d, ‘ both our sakes,
So you will wed me, let it be at once.’

So these were wed and merrily rang the bells,
Merrily rang the bells and they were wed,
But never merrily beat Annie’s heart.
A footstep seem’d to fall beside her path, 510
She knew not whence ; a whisper on her ear,
She knew not what ; nor loved she to be left
Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.
What ail’d her then, that ere she enter’d, often
Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,
Fearing to enter : Philip thought he knew :
Such doubts and fears were common to her state,
Being with child : but when her child was born,
Then her new child was as herself renew’d,
Then the new mother came about her heart, 520
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch ? prosperously sail’d
The ship ‘ Good Fortune,’ tho’ at setting forth
The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward, shook
And almost overwhelm’d her, yet unvext
She slipt across the summer of the world,
Then after a long tumble about the Cape

And frequent interchange of foul and fair,
She passing thro' the summer world again, 530
The breath of heaven came continually
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of those times,
A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at first indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows: 540
Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,
Then baffling, a long course of them ; and last
Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens
Till hard upon the cry of ' breakers ' came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance, 550
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing roots ;
Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge

They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm, a hut,
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than boy,
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck, 560
Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-life.
They could not leave him. After he was gone,
The two remaining found a fallen stem ;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.
In those two deaths he read God's warning ' wait.'

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes, 570
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
The lustre of the long convolvuluses
That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the world,
All these he saw ; but what he fain had seen
He could not see, the kindly human face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef, 580
The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd

And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail :
No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices ;
The blaze upon the waters to the east ; 590
The blaze upon his island overhead ;
The blaze upon the waters to the west ;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in Heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him paused,
A phantom made of many phantoms moved
Before him haunting him, or he himself
Moved haunting people, things and places, known 600
Far in a darker isle beyond the line :
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,
The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,
The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill
November dawns and dewy-glooming downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-colour'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away— 610
He heard the pealing of his parish bells ;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up
Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle
Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart
Spoken with That, which being everywhere
Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head
The sunny and rainy seasons came and went
Year after year. His hopes to see his own, 620
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another ship
(She wanted water) blown by baffling winds,
Like the Good Fortune, from her destined course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she lay :
For since the mate had seen at early dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle
The silent water slipping from the hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst away 630
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the shores
With clamour. Downward from his mountain gorge
Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it seem'd,

With inarticulate rage, and making signs
They knew not what: and yet he led the way
To where the rivulets of sweet water ran ;
And ever as he mingled with the crew,
And heard them talking, his long-bounden tongue 640
Was loosen'd, till he made them understand ;
Whom, when their casks were fill'd they took
aboard :

And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,
Scarce-credited at first but more and more,
Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it:
And clothes they gave him and free passage home ;
But oft he work'd among the rest and shook
His isolation from him. None of these
Came from his country, or could answer him,
If question'd, aught of what he cared to know. 650
And dull the voyage was with long delays,
The vessel scarce sea-worthy ; but evermore
His fancy fled before the lazy wind
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon
He like a lover down thro' all his blood
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath
Of England, blown across her ghostly wall :
And that same morning officers and men
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it: 660
Then moving up the coast they landed him,
Ev'n in that harbour whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,
But homeward—home—what home ? had he a home ?
His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,
Sunny but chill ; till drawn thro' either chasm,
Where either haven open'd on the deeps,
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in gray ;
Cut off the length of highway on before,
And left but narrow breadth to left and right 670
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.
On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down :
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom ;
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home 680
Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes
In those far-off seven happy years were born ;
But finding neither light nor murmur there
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking 'dead or dead to me !'

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,
Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
A front of timber-crost antiquity ;

So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone ; but he was gone 690
Who kept it ; and his widow, Miriam Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the house ;
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now
Still, with yet a bed for wandering men.
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,
So broken—all the story of his house. 700
His baby's death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth
Of Philip's child : and o'er his countenance
No shadow past, nor motion : any one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale
Less than the teller : only when she closed
' Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost '
He, shaking his grey head pathetically, 710
Repeated muttering ' cast away and lost ; '
Again in deeper inward whispers ' lost ! '

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again ;
‘ If I might look on her sweet face again

And know that she is happy.' So the thought
Haunted and harass'd him, and drove him forth,
At evening when the dull November day
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.
There he sat down gazing on all below ;
There did a thousand memories roll upon him, 720
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
The ruddy square of comfortable light.
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the street,
The latest house to landward : but behind,
With one small gate that open'd on the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square and wall'd : 730
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it :
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew ; and thence
That which he better might have shunn'd, if griefs
Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd board
Sparkled and shone ; so genial was the hearth :
And on the right hand of the hearth he saw 740

Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees ;
And o'er her second father stoopt a girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy arms,
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they laugh'd :
And on the left hand of the hearth he saw
The mother glancing often toward her babe, 750
But turning now and then to speak with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tall and strong,
And saying that which pleased him, for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life beheld
His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness,
And his own children tall and beautiful,
And him, that other, reigning in his place,
Lord of his rights and of his children's love,— 760
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him all,
Because things seen are mightier than things heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch, and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,
And feeling all along the garden-wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found, 770
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

'Too hard to bear ! why did they take me thence ?
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness 780
A little longer ! aid me, give me strength
Not to tell her, never to let her know.
Help me not to break in upon her peace.
My children too ! must I not speak to these ?
They know me not. I should betray myself.
Never : no father's kiss for me—the girl
So like her mother, and the boy, my son.'

There speech and thought and nature fail'd a little,
And he lay tranced ; but when he rose and paced
Back toward his solitary home again, 790
All down the long and narrow street he went
Beating it in upon his weary brain,

As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
' Not to tell her, never to let her know.'

He was not all unhappy. His resolve
Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore
Prayer from a living source within the will,
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,
Kept him a living soul. ' This miller's wife ' 800
He said to Miriam ' that you spoke about,
Has she no fear that her first husband lives ? '
' Ay, ay, poor soul ' said Miriam, ' fear enow !
If you could tell her you had seen him dead,
Why, that would be her comfort ; ' and he thought
' After the Lord has call'd me she shall know,
I wait His time,' and Enoch set himself,
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.
Almost to all things could he turn his hand.
Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought 810
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd
At lading and unlading the tall barks,
That brought the stinted commerce of those days ;
Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself :
Yet since he did but labour for himself,
Work without hope, there was not life in it
Whereby the man could live ; and as the year
Roll'd itself round again to meet the day
When Enoch had return'd, a languor came

Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually 820
Weakening the man, till he could do no more,
But kept the house, his chair, and last his bed.
And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.
For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck
See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall
The boat that bears the hope of life approach
To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier hope
On Enoch thinking 'after I am gone, 830
Then may she learn I lov'd her to the last.'
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said,
'Woman, I have a secret—only swear,
Before I tell you—swear upon the book
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead.'
'Dead,' clamour'd the good woman, 'hear him talk!
I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round.'
'Swear' added Enoch sternly 'on the book.'
And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.
'Then Enoch rolling his grey eyes upon her, 840
'Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?'
'Know him?' she said 'I knew him far away.
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;
Held his head high, and cared for no man, he.'
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her;
'His head is low, and no man cares for him.

I think I have not three days more to live ;
I am the man.' At which the woman gave
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.
' You Arden, you ! nay,—sure he was a foot
Higher than you be.' Enoch said again
' My God has bow'd me down to what I am ;
My grief and solitude have broken me ;
Nevertheless, know you that I am he
Who married—but that name has twice been
changed—

850

I married her who married Philip Ray.
Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his voyage,
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
And how he kept it. As the woman heard,
Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly
To rush abroad all round the little haven,
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes ;
But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,
Saying only ' See your bairns before you go !
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and arose
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung
A moment on her words, but then replied :

860

' Woman, disturb me not now at the last,
But let me hold my purpose till I die.
Sit down again ; mark me and understand,

870

While I have power to speak. I charge you now,
When you shall see her, tell her that I died
Blessing her, praying for her, loving her ;
Save for the bar between us, loving her
As when she laid her head beside my own.
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
So like her mother, that my latest breath
Was spent in blessing her and praying for her. 880
And tell my son that I died blessing him.
And say to Philip that I blest him too ;
He never meant us anything but good.
But if my children care to see me dead,
Who hardly knew me living, let them come,
I am their father : but she must not come,
For my dead face would vex her after-life.
And now there is but one of all my blood
Who will embrace me in the world-to-be :
This hair is his : she cut it off and gave it, 890
And I have borne it with me all these years,
And thought to bear it with me to my grave ;
But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,
My babe in bliss : wherefore when I am gone,
Take, give her this, for it may comfort her :
It will moreover be a token to her,
That I am he.'

He ceased ; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer promising all,

That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her
Repeating all he wish'd, and once again 900
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,
There came so loud a calling of the sea,
That all the houses in the haven rang.
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad
Crying with a loud voice ' A sail ! a sail !
I am saved ; ' and so fell back and spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little port 910
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me !
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark !
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark ;

10

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

— —

Robert Browning

HERVÉ RIEL

I

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred
ninety-two,
Did the English fight the French,—woe to France!
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through the
blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks
pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to Saint-Malo on the
Rance,
With the English fleet in view.

II

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in
full chase ;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship,
Damfreville ;
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all ; 10
And they signalled to the place
“ Help the winners of a race !
Get us guidance, give us harbour, take us
quick—or, quicker still,
Here's the English can and will ! ”

III

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt
on board ;
“ Why, what hope or chance have ships like
these to pass ? ” laughed they :
“ Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage
scarred and scored,—
Shall the ‘ Formidable ’ here, with her twelve and
eighty guns,
Think to make the river-mouth by the single
narrow way,
Trust to enter—where 'tis ticklish for a craft of 20
twenty tons,

IV

V

Give the word !" But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard ;
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid
all these
—A Captain ? A Lieutenant ? A Mate— 40
first, second, third ?

No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete !
But a simple Breton sailor pressed by 'Tourville
for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

VI

And " What mockery or malice have we here ? "
cries Hervé Riel :
" Are you mad, you Malouins ? Are you cowards,
fools, or rogues ?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the
soundings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every
swell
'Twixt the offing here and Grève where the
river disembogues ?
Are you bought by English gold ? Is it 50
love the lying's for ?
Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot
of Solidor.
Burn the fleet and ruin France ? That were
worse than fifty Hogues !
Sirs, they know I speak the truth ! Sirs, believe
me there's a way !

Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this ' Formidable ' clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passage 60.
I know well,
Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound ;
And if one ship misbehave,—
—Keel so much as grate the ground,
Why, I've nothing but my life,—here's my head ! ”
cries Hervé Riel.

VII

Not a minute more to wait.
“ Steer us in, then, small and great !
Take the helm, lead the line, save the
squadron ! ” cried its chief.
Captains, give the sailor place !
He is Admiral, in brief. 70.
Still the north-wind, by God's grace
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage, as its inch of way were the
wide sea's profound !
See, safe thro' shoal and rock,
How they follow in a flock,

Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates
the ground,

Not a spar that comes to grief !

The peril, see, is past. 80

All are harboured to the last,

And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor !" —
sure as fate,

Up the English come,—too late !

. VIII

So, the storm subsides to calm :

They see the green trees wave

On the heights o'erlooking Grève.

Hearts that bled are stanch'd with balm.

"Just our rapture to enhance,

Let the English rake the bay,

Gnash their teeth and glare askance 90

As they cannonade away !

'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the
Rance !"

How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's
countenance !

Out burst all with one accord,

"This is Paradise for Hell !

Let France, let France's King

Thank the man that did the thing !"

What a shout, and all one word,

"Hervé Riel !"

As he stepped in front once more, 100
Not a symptom of surprise
In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

IX

Then said Damfreville, "My friend
I must speak out at the end,
Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips :
You have saved the King his ships,
You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse ! 110
Demand whate'er you will,
France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have ! or my name's
not Damfreville."

X

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue :
" Since I needs must say my say,
Since on board the duty's done,
And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is 120
it but a run ?—

Since 'tis ask and have, I may—

Since the others go ashore—

Come ! A good whole holiday !

Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the
Belle Aurore !”

That he asked and that he got,—nothing more.

XI

Name and deed alike are lost :

Not a pillar nor a post

In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell ;
Not a head in white and black

On a single fishing-smack,

130

In memory of the man but for whom had
gone to wrack

All that France saved from the fight whence

— England bore the bell.

Go to Paris : rank on rank

Search the heroes flung pell-mell

On the Louvre, face and flank !

You shall look long enough ere you come to

Hervé Riel.

So, for better and for worse,

Hervé Riel, accept my verse !

In my verse, Hervè Riel, do thou once more 140
Save the squadron, honour, France love thy
 wife the Belle Aurore !

THE MELON-SELLER

Going his rounds one day in Ispahan,—
Half-way on Dervishhood, not wholly there,—
Ferishtah, as he crossed a certain bridge,
Came startled on a well-remembered face.
“Can it be ? What, turned melon-seller—thou ?
Clad in such sordid garb, thy seat yon step
Where dogs brush by thee and express contempt ?
Methinks, thy head-gear is some scooped-out gourd !
Nay, sunk to slicing up, for readier sale,
One fruit whereof the whole scarce feeds a swine ? 10
Wast thou the Shah’s Prime Minister, men saw
Ride on his right-hand while a trumpet blew
And Persia hailed the Favourite ? Yea, twelve
 years
Are past, I judge, since that transcendancy,
And thou didst peculate and art abased ;
No less, twelve years since, thou didst hold in hand
Persia, couldst halve and quarter, mince its pulp
As pleased thee, and distribute—melon-like—
Portions to whoso played the parasite,
Or suck—thyself—each juicy morsel. How 20

Enormous thy abjection,—hell from heaven,
Made tenfold hell by contrast ! Whisper me !
Dost thou curse God for granting twelve years' bliss
Only to prove this day's the direr lot ? "

Whereon the beggar raised a brow, once more
Luminous and imperial, from the rags.

"Fool, does thy folly think my foolishness
Dwells rather on the fact that God appoints
A day of woe to the unworthy one,
Than that the unworthy one, by God's award, 30
Tasted joy twelve years long ? Or buy a slice,
Or go to school ! "

To school Ferishtah went ;
And, schooling ended, passed from Ispahan
To Nishapur, that Elburz looks above
—Where they dig turquoise : there kept school
himself,

The melon-seller's speech, his stock in trade.
Some say a certain Jew adduced the word
Out of their book, it sounds so much the same, 40
" Shall we receive good at the hand of God
And evil not receive ? "

Matthew Arnold

SAINT BRANDAN

Saint Brandan sails the northern main ;
The brotherhoods of saints are glad.
He greets them once, he sails again ;
So late !—such storms !—The Saint is mad !

He heard, across the howling seas,
Chime convent-bells on wintry nights ;
He saw, on spray-swept Hebrides,
Twinkle the monastery-lights ;

But north, still north, Saint Brandan steer'd,
And now no bells, no convents more !
The hurtling Polar lights are near'd,
The sea without a human shore.

10

At last—(it was the Christmas-night ;
Stars shone after a day of storm)—
He sees float past an iceberg white,
And on it—Christ !—a living form !

That furtive mien, that scowling eye,
Of hair that red and tufted fell—
It is—Oh, where shall Brandan fly ?
The traitor Judas, out of hell !

20

Palsied with terror, Brandan sate :
The moon was bright, the iceberg near.
He hears a voice sigh humbly : " Wait !
By high permission I am here.

" One moment wait, thou holy man !
On earth my crime, my death, they knew ;
My name is under all men's ban—
Ah, tell them of my respite too !

" Tell them, one blessed Christmas-night
(It was the first after I came,
Breathing self-murder, frenzy, spite,
To rue my guilt in endless flame)—

30

" I felt, as I in torment lay
'Mid the souls plagued by heavenly power
An angel touch mine arm, and say :
Go hence, and cool thyself an hour !

" ' Ah, whence this mercy, Lord ? ' I said.
The Leper recollect, said he,
Who ask'd the passers-by for aid,
In Joppa, and thy charity.

40

" Then I remember'd how I went,
In Joppa, through the public street,
One morn when the sirocco spent
Its storms of dust with burning heat ;

“ And in the street a leper sate,
Shivering with fever, naked, old ;
Sand raked his sores from heel to pate,
The hot wind fever'd him fivefold.

“ He gazed upon me as I pass'd,
And murmur'd : *Help me, or I die !* 50
To the poor wretch my cloak I cast,
Saw him look eased, and hurried by.

“ Oh, Brandan, think what grace divine,
What blessing must full goodness shower,
When fragment of it small, like mine,
Hath such inestimable power !

“ Well-fed, well-clothed, well-friended, I
Did that chance act of good, that one !
Then went my way to kill and lie—
Forgot my deed as soon as done. 60

“ That germ of kindness, in the womb
Of mercy caught, did not expire ;
Outlives my guilt, outlives my doom,
And friends me in the pit of fire.

“ Once every year, when carols wake,
On earth, the Christmas-night's repose,
Arising from the sinners' lake,
I journey to these healing snows.

“ I stanch with ice my burning breast,
With silence balm my whirling brain. 70
O Brandan ! to this hour of rest,
That Joppan leper's ease was pain ! ”—

Tears started to Saint Brandan's eyes ;
He bow'd his head, he breathed a prayer—
Then look'd and lo, the frosty skies !
The iceberg, and no Judas there !

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away ;
Down and away below !
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shorewards blow,
Now the salt tides seawards flow ;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away !
This way, this way !

Call her once before you go— 10
Call once yet !
In a voice that she will know :
“ Margaret ! Margaret ! ”

Children's voices should be dear
 (Call once more) to a mother's ear ;
 Children's voices, wild with pain.
 Surely she will come again !
 Call her once and come away ;
 This way, this way !

"Mother dear, we cannot stay." 20
 The wild white horses foam and fret.
 Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down ;
 Call no more !
 One last look at the white-wall'd town,
 And the little grey church on the windy shore ;
 Then come down !
 She will not come though you call all day ;
 Come away, come away !

Children dear, was it yesterday 30
 We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?
 In the caverns where we lay,
 Through the surf and through the swell,
 The far-off sound of a silver bell ?
 Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
 Where the winds are all asleep ;
 Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
 Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
 Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
 Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground ; 40

Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine ;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye ?
When did music come this way ?
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away ?
Once she sate with you and me, 50
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green
sea ;
She said : " I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'T will be Easter-time in the world—ah me !
And I lose my poor soul, Merman ! here with thee."
I said : " Go up, dear heart, through the waves ; 60
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind
sea-caves ! "
She smiled, she went up through the surf in
the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, were we long alone ?

“ The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan ;
Long prayers,” I said, “ in the world they
say ;

“ Come ! ” I said ; and we rose through the surf in
the bay.

We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall’d
town ;

Through the narrow paved streets, where all was 70
still,

To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their
prayers,

But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.

We climb’d on the graves, on the stones worn
with rains,

And we gazed up the aisle through the small
leaded panes.

She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear :

“ Margaret, hist ! come quick, we are here !

Dear heart,” I said, “ we are long alone ;

The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.”

But, ah, she gave me never a look, 80

For her eyes were seal’d to the holy book !

Loud prays the priest ; shut stands the door.

Come away, children, call no more !

Come away, come down, call no more !

Down, down, down !

Down to the depths of the sea !

She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.

Hark what she sings : “ O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy ! 90
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well ;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun ! ”
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand
And over the sand at the sea ;
And her eyes are set in a stare ; 100
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh ;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children ;

Come children, come down !

The hoarse wind blows colder ;

Lights shine in the town.

She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door ;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.

We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.

Singing : “ Here came a mortal
But faithless was she !
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea.”

120

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low ;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom ;
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom ;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.

130

We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town :
At the church on the hill-side—
And then come back down.

Singing : " There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she !
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

QUIET WORK

One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one,
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—
Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity !
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplish'd in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry !
Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's senseless uproar mingling with his toil, 10
Still do thy quiet ministers move on,
Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting ;
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil ;
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

MONICA'S LAST PRAYER

“ Ah could thy grave at home, at Carthage, be ! ”
Care not for that, and lay me where I fall !
Everywhere heard will be the judgment-call.
But at God's altar, oh ! remember me.

Thus Monica, and died in Italy.
Yet fervent had her longing been, through all
Her course, for home at last, and burial
With her own husband, by the Libyan sea.

Had been ! but at the end, to her pure soul
All tie with all beside seem'd vain and cheap, 10
And union before God the only care.

Creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole ;
Yet we her memory, as she pray'd, will keep,
Keep by this : *Life in God, and union there !*

— — — —

BALDER DEAD

I

SENDING

So on the floor lay Balder dead ; and round
Lay thickly strewn swords, axes, darts, and spears,
Which all the Gods in sport had idly thrown
At Balder, whom no weapon pierc'd or clove !

But in his breast stood fixt the fatal bough
Of mistletoe, which Lok the Accuser gave
To Hoder, and unwitting Hoder threw :
'Gainst that alone had Balder's life no charm.
And all the Gods and all the Heroes came
And stood round Balder on the bloody floor, 10
Weeping and wailing ; and Valhalla rang
Up to its golden roofs with sobs and cries :
And on the tables stood the untasted meats,
And in the horns and gold-rimm'd skulls the wine :
And now would night have fall'n, and found them yet
Wailing ; but otherwise was Odin's will :
And thus the Father of the Ages spake :—
 ' Enough of tears, ye Gods, enough of wail !
Not to lament in was Valhalla made.
If any here might weep for Balder's death, 20
I most might weep, his father ; such a son
I lose to-day, so bright, so lov'd a God.
But he has met that doom, which long ago
The Nornies, when his mother bare him, spun,
And fate set seal, that so his end must be.
Balder has met his death, and ye survive :
Weep him an hour, but what can grief avail ?
For ye yourselves, ye Gods, shall meet your doom, .
All ye who hear me, and inhabit Heaven,
And I too, Odin too, the Lord of all ; 30
But ours we shall not meet, when that day comes,
With women's tears and weak complaining cries—

Why should we meet another's portion so ?
Rather it fits you, having wept your hour.
With cold, dry eyes, and hearts compos'd and stern,
To live, as erst, your daily life in Heaven.
By me shall vengeance on the murderer Lok,
The foe, the accuser, whom, though Gods, we hate,
Be strictly car'd for, in the appointed day.
Meanwhile, to-morrow, when the morning dawns, 40
Bring wood to the seashore to Balder's ship.
And on the deck build high a funeral-pile,
And on the top lay Balder's corpse, and put
Fire to the wood, and send him out to sea
To burn ; for that is what the dead desire.'

So having spoke, the king of Gods arose,
And mounted his horse Sleipner, whom he rode.
And from the hall of Heaven he rode away
To Lidskialf, and sate upon his throne,
The mount, from whence his eye surveys the world. 50
And far from Heaven he turn'd his shining orbs
To look on Midgard, and the earth, and men :
And on the conjuring Lapps he bent his gaze
Whom antler'd reindeer pull over the snow ;
And on the Finns, the gentlest of mankind,
Fair men, who live in holes under the ground ;
Nor did he look once more to Ida's plain,
Nor tow'rd Valhalla, and the sorrowing Gods ;
For well he knew the Gods would heed his word,
And cease to mourn, and think of Balder's pyre. 60

But in Valhalla all the Gods went back
From around Balder, all the Heroes went ;
And left his body stretch'd upon the floor.
And on their golden chairs they sate again,
Beside the tables, in the hall of Heaven ;
And before each the cooks who serv'd them plac'd
New messes of the boar Serimner's flesh,
And the Valkyries crown'd their horns with mead.
So they, with pent-up hearts and tearless eyes,
Wailing no more, in silence ate and drank, 70
While twilight fell, and sacred night came on.

But the blind Hoder left the feasting Gods
In Odin's halls, and went through Asgard streets,
And past the haven where the Gods have moor'd
Their ships, and through the gate, beyond the wall ;
Though sightless, yet his own mind led the God.
Down to the margin of the roaring sea
He came, and sadly went along the sand,
Between the waves and black o'erhanging cliffs
Where in and out the screaming sea-fowl fly ; 80
Until he came to where a gully breaks
Through the cliff-wall, and a fresh stream runs down
From the high moors behind, and meets the sea.
There, in the glen, Fensaler stands, the house
Of Frea, honour'd mother of the Gods,
And shows its lighted windows to the main.
There he went up, and pass'd the open doors ;
And in the hall he found those women old,

The prophetesses, who by rite eterne
On Frea's hearth feed high the sacred fire 90
Both night and day ; and by the inner wall
Upon her golden chair the Mother sate,
With folded hands, revolving things to come.
To her drew Hoder near, and spake, and said :—

‘ Mother, a child of bale thou bar'st in me !
For, first, thou barest me with blinded eyes,
Sightless and helpless, wandering weak in Heaven ;
And, after that, of ignorant witless mind
Thou barest me, and unforeseeing soul ;
That I alone must take the branch from Lok, 100
The foe, the accuser, whom, though Gods, we hate,
And cast it at the dear-lov'd Balder's breast
At whom the Gods in sport their weapons threw—
'Gainst that alone had Balder's life no charm.
Now therefore what to attempt, or whither fly,
For who will bear my hateful sight in Heaven ?
Can I, O mother, bring them Balder back ?
Or—for thou know'st the fates, and things allow'd—
Can I with Hela's power a compact strike,
And make exchange, and give my life for his ? ’ 110

He spoke : the mother of the Gods replied :—
‘ Hoder, ill-fated, child of bale, my son,
Sightless in soul and eye, what words are these?
That one, long-portion'd with his doom of death,
Should change his lot, and fill another's life,
And Hela yield to this, and let him go !

On Balder Death hath laid her hand, not thee ;
Nor doth she count this life a price for that.
For many Gods in Heaven, not thou alone,
Would freely die to purchase Balder back, 120
And wend themselves to Hela's gloomy realm.
For not so gladsome is that life in Heaven
Which Gods and Heroes lead, in feast and fray,
Waiting the darkness of the final times,
That one should grudge its loss for Balder's sake,
Balder their joy, so bright, so lov'd a God.
But Fate withstands, and laws forbid this way.

Yet in my secret mind one way I know,
Nor do I judge if it shall win or fail ;
But much must still be tried, which shall but fail.' 130

And the blind Hoder answer'd her, and said :—
' What way is this, O mother, that thou show'st ?
Is it a matter which a God might try ? '

And straight the mother of the Gods replied :—
' There is a road which leads to Hela's realm,
Untrodden, lonely, far from light and Heaven.
Who goes that way must take no other horse
To ride, but Sleipner, Odin's horse, alone.
Nor must he choose that common path of Gods
Which every day they come and go in Heaven, 140
O'er the bridge Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
Past Midgard fortress, down to earth and men ;
But he must tread a dark untravell'd road
Which branches from the north of Heaven, and ride

Nine days, nine nights, toward the northern ice,
Through valleys deep-engulf'd, with roaring streams.
And he will reach on the tenth morn. a bridge
Which spans with golden arches Giall's stream,
Not Bifrost, but that bridge a damsel keeps,
Who tells the passing troops of dead their way 150
To the low shore of ghosts, and Hela's realm.
And she will bid him northward steer his course :
Then he will journey through no lighted land,
Nor see the sun arise, nor see it set ;
But he must ever watch the northern Bear,
Who from her frozen height with jealous eye
Confronts the Dog and Hunter in the south,
And is alone not dipt in Ocean's stream.
And straight he will come down to Ocean's strand—
Ocean, whose watery ring enfolds the world, 160
And on whose marge the ancient giants dwell.
But he will reach its unknown northern shore,
Far, far beyond the outmost giant's home,
At the chink'd fields of ice, the waste of snow :
And he will fare across the dismal ice
Northward, until he meets a stretching wall
Barring his way, and in the wall a grate.
But then he must dismount, and on the ice
Tighten the girths of Sleipner, Odin's horse,
And make him leap the grate, and come within. 170
And he will see stretch round him Hela's realm,
The plains of Niflheim, where dwell the dead,

And hear the roaring of the streams of Hell.
And he will see the feeble, shadowy tribes,
And Balder sitting crown'd, and Hela's throne.
Then must he not regard the wailful ghosts
Who all will flit, like eddy leaves, around ;
But he must straight accost their solemn queen,
And pay her homage, and entreat with prayers,
Telling her all that grief they have in Heaven 180
For Balder, whom she holds by right below ;
If haply he may melt her heart with words,
And make her yield, and give him Balder back.'

She spoke ; but Hoder answer'd her and said :—
' Mother, a dreadful way is this thou show'st ;
No journey for a sightless God to go ! '

And straight the mother of the Gods replied :—
' Therefore thyself thou shalt not go, my son.
But he whom first thou meetest when thou com'st
To Asgard, and declar'st this hidden way, 190
Shall go ; and I will be his guide unseen.'

She spoke, and on her face let fall her veil,
And bow'd her head, and sate with folded hands
But at the central hearth those women old,
Who while the Mother spake had ceased their toil,
Began again to heap the sacred fire :
And Hoder turn'd, and left his mother's house,
Fensaler, whose lit windows look to sea ;
And came again down to the roaring waves,
And back along the beach to Asgard went, 200

Pondering on that which Frea said should be.

But night came down, and darken'd Asgard
streets.

Then from their loath'd feast the Gods arose,
And lighted torches, and took up the corpse
Of Balder from the floor of Odin's hall,
And laid it on a bier, and bare him home
Through the fast-darkening streets to his own house,
Breidablik, on whose columns Balder grav'd
The enchantments that recall the dead to life :

For wise he was, and many curious arts, 210

Postures of runes, and healing herbs he knew ;

Unhappy ! but that art he did not know,

To keep his own life safe, and see the sun.

There to his hall the Gods brought Balder home,

And each bespoke him as he laid him down:—

‘Would that ourselves, O Balder, we were borne
Home to our halls, with torchlight, by our kin,
So thou might'st live, and still delight the Gods ! ’

They spake ; and each went home to his own house.

But there was one, the first of all the Gods 220

For speed, and Hermod was his name in Heaven ;

Most fleet he was, but now he went the last,

Heavy in heart for Balder, to his house,

Which he in Asgard built him, there to dwell,

Against the harbour, by the city-wall:

Him the blind Hoder met, as he came up

And mounted Sleipner, and in darkness rode
To Asgard. And the stars came out in heaven,
High over Asgard, to light home the King.
But fiercely Odin gallop'd, mov'd in heart ;
And swift to Asgard, to the gate, he came :
And terribly the hoofs of Sleipner rang 260
Along the flinty floor of Asgard streets,
And the Gods trembled on their golden beds
Hearing the wrathful Father coming home—
For dread, for like a whirlwind, Odin came :
And to Valhalla's gate he rode, and left
Sleipner; and Sleipner went to his own stall ;
And in Valhalla Odin laid him down.

But in Breidablik, Nanna, Balder's wife,
Came with the Goddesses who wrought her will,
And stood by Balder lying on his bier : 270
And at his head and feet she station'd Scalds
Who in their lives were famous for their song ;
These o'er the corpse inton'd a plaintive strain,
A dirge ; and Nanna and her train replied.
And far into the night they wail'd their dirge :
But when their souls were satisfied with wail,
They went, and laid them down, and Nanna went
Into an upper chamber, and lay down ;
And Frea seal'd her tired lids with sleep.

And 'twas when night is bordering hard on 280
dawn,

When air is chilliest, and the stars sunk low ;
Then Balder's spirit through the gloom drew near,
In garb, in form, in feature as he was,
Alive, and still the rays were round his head
Which were his glorious mark in Heaven ; he stood
Over against the curtain of the bed,
And gaz'd on Nanna as she slept, and spake :—
 ' Poor lamb, thou sleepest, and forgett'st thy
 woe.

Tears stand upon the lashes of thine eyes,
Tears wet the pillow by thy cheek ; but thou, 290
Like a young child, hast cried thyself to sleep.
Sleep on : I watch thee, and am here to aid.
Alive I kept not far from thee, dear soul !
Neither do I neglect thee now, though dead.
For with to-morrow's dawn the Gods prepare
To gather wood, and build a funeral-pile
Upon my ship, and burn my corpse with fire,
That sad, sole honour of the dead ; and thee
They think to burn, and all my choicest wealth,
With me, for thus ordains the common rite : 300
But it shall not be so : but mild, but swift,
But painless shall a stroke from Frea come,
To cut thy thread of life, and free thy soul,
And they shall burn thy corpse with mine, not thee.
And well I know that by no stroke of death,
Tardy or swift, wouldst thou be loath to die,
So it restored thee, Nanna, to my side,

Whom thou so well hast lov'd; but I can smoothe
Thy way, and this, at least, my prayers avail.
Yes, and I fain would altogether ward 310
Death from thy head, and with the Gods in
Heaven

Prolong thy life, though not by thee desir'd :
But right bars this, not only thy desire.
Yet dreary, Nanna, is the life they lead
In that dim world, in Hela's mouldering realm ;
And doleful are the ghosts, the troops of dead,
Whom Hela with austere control presides ;
For of the race of Gods is no one there,
Save me alone, and Hela, solemn queen ;
And all the nobler souls of mortal men 320
On battle-field have met their death, and now
Feast in Valhalla, in my father's hall ;
Only the inglorious sort are there below,
The old, the cowards, and the weak are there—
Men spent by sickness, or obscure decay.
But even there, O Nanna, we might find
Some solace in each other's look and speech,
Wandering together through that gloomy world,
And talking of the life we led in Heaven,
While we yet lived, among the other Gods.' 330

He spake, and straight his lineaments began
To fade ; and Nanna in her sleep stretch'd out
Her arms towards him with a cry ; but he
Mournfully shook his head, and disappear'd.

And as the woodman sees a little smoke
Hang in the air, afield, and disappear—
So Balder faded in the night away.
And Nanna on her bed sank back ; but then
Frea, the mother of the Gods, with stroke
Painless and swift, set free her airy soul, 340
Which took, on Balder's track, the way below ;
And instantly the sacred morn appear'd.

II

JOURNEY TO THE DEAD

Forth from the east, up the ascent of Heaven,
Day drove his courser with the shining mane ;
And in Valhalla, from his gable perch,
The golden-crested cock began to crow :
Hereafter, in the blackest dead of night,
With shrill and dismal cries that bird shall crow,
Warning the Gods that foes draw nigh to Heaven ;
But now he crew at dawn, a cheerful note, 350
To wake the Gods and Heroes to their tasks.
And all the Gods, and all the Heroes, woke.
And from their beds the Heroes rose, and donn'd
Their arms, and led their horses from the stall,
And mounted them, and in Valhalla's court
Were rang'd ; and then the daily fray began.
And all day long they there are hack'd and hewn,

'Mid dust, and groans, and limbs lopp'd off, and blood ;
But all at night return to Odin's hall,
Woundless and fresh ; such lot is theirs in Heaven. 360
And the Valkyries on their steeds went forth
Toward earth and fights of men ; and at their side
Skulda, the youngest of the Nornies, rode ;
And over Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
Past Midgard fortress, down to earth they came ;
There through some battle-field, where men fall fast,
Their horses fetlock-deep in blood, they ride,
And pick the bravest warriors out for death,
Whom they bring back with them at night to Heaven
To glad the Gods, and feast in Odin's hall. 370

But the Gods went not now, as otherwhile,
Into the tilt-yard, where the Heroes fought,
To feast their eyes with looking on the fray ;
Nor did they to their judgment-place repair
By the ash Igdrasil, in Ida's plain,
Where they hold council, and give laws for men :
But they went, Odin first, the rest behind,
To the hall Gladheim, which is built of gold,
Where are in circle rang'd twelve golden chairs,
And in the midst one higher, Odin's throne : 380
There all the Gods in silence sate them down ;
And thus the Father of the ages spake :—

'Go quickly, Gods, bring wood to the seashore,
With all, which it beseems the dead to have,
And make a funeral-pile on Balder's ship ;

On the twelfth day the Gods shall burn his corpse.
But Hermod, thou, take Sleipner, and ride down
To Hela's kingdom, to ask Balder back.'

So said he ; and the Gods arose, and took
Axes and ropes, and at their head came Thor, 390
Shouldering his hammer, which the giants know :
Forth wended they, and drove their steeds before :
And up the dewy mountain-tracks they far'd
To the dark forests, in the early dawn ;
And up and down, and side and slant they roam'd :
And from the glens all day an echo came
Of crashing falls ; for with his hammer Thor
Smote 'mid the rocks the lichen-bearded pines,
And burst their roots, while to their tops the Gods
Made fast the woven ropes, and hal'd them down, 400
And lopp'd their boughs, and clove them on the
 sward,
And bound the logs behind their steeds to draw,
And drove them homeward ; and the snorting steeds
Went straining through the crackling brushwood
 down,
And by the darkling forest paths the Gods
Follow'd, and on their shoulders carried boughs.
And they came out upon the plain, and pass'd
Asgard, and led their horses to the beach,
And loos'd them of their loads on the seashore,
And rang'd the wood in stacks by Balder's ship ; 410
And every God went home to his own house.

But when the Gods were to the forest gone,
Hermod led Sleipner from Valhalla forth
And saddled him ; before that, Sleipner brook'd
No meaner hand than Odin's on his mane,
On his broad back no lesser rider bore ;
Yet docile now he stood at Hermod's side,
Arching his neck, and glad to be bestrode,
Knowing the God they went to seek, how dear.
But Hermod mounted him, and sadly far'd 420
In silence up the dark untravell'd road
Which branches from the north of Heaven, and
went

All day ; and daylight wan'd, and night came on.
And all that night he rode, and journey'd so,
Nine days, nine nights, towards the northern ice,
Through valleys deep-engulf'd, by roaring streams.
And on the tenth morn he beheld the bridge
Which spans with golden arches Giall's stream,
And on the bridge a damsel watching arm'd,
In the strait passage, at the farther end, 430
Where the road issues between walling rocks.
Scant space that warder left for passers by ;
But as when cowherds in October drive
Their kine across a snowy mountain-pass
To winter-pasture on the southern side,
And on the ridge a waggon chokes the way,
Wedg'd in the snow ; then painfully the hinds
With goad and shouting urge their cattle past.

Plunging through deep untrodden banks of snow
To right and left, and warm steam fills the air— 440
So on the bridge that damsel block'd the way,
And question'd Hermod as he came, and said :—

‘ Who art thou on thy black and fiery horse
Under whose hoofs the bridge o'er Giall's stream
Rumbles and shakes ? Tell me thy race and
home.

But yesternorn, five troops of dead pass'd by,
Bound on their way below to Hela's realm.
Nor shook the bridge so much as thou alone.
And thou hast flesh and colour on thy cheeks,
Like men who live, and draw the vital air ; 450
Nor look'st thou pale and wan, like men deceas'd.
Souls bound below, my daily passers here.’

And the fleet-footed Hermod answer'd her :—
‘ O damsel, Hermod am I call'd, the son
Of Odin ; and my high-roof'd house is built
Far hence, in Asgard, in the city of Gods ;
And Sleipner, Odin's horse, is this I ride.
And I come, sent this road on Balder's track ;
Say then, if he hath cross'd thy bridge or no ? ’

He spake ; the warder of the bridge replied :— 460
‘ O Hermod, rarely do the feet of Gods
Or of the horses of the Gods resound
Upon my bridge ; and, when they cross, I know.
Balder hath gone this way, and ta'en the road
Below there, to the north, toward Hela's realm.

From here the cold white mist can be discern'd,
Not lit with sun, but through the darksome air
By the dim vapour-blotted light of stars,
Which hangs over the ice where lies the road.
For in that ice are lost those northern streams, 470
Freezing and ridging in their onward flow,
Which from the fountain of Vergelmer run,
The spring that bubbles up by Hela's throne.
There are the joyless seats, the haunt of ghosts,
Hela's pale swarms; and there was Balder bound.
Ride on ; pass free : but he by this is there.'

She spake, and stepp'd aside, and left him
room,

And Hermod greeted her, and gallop'd by
Across the bridge ; then she took post again.
But northward Hermod rode, the way below ; 480
And o'er a darksome tract, which knows no
sun.

But by the blotted light of stars, he far'd.
And he came down to Ocean's northern strand
At the drear ice, beyond the giants' home :
Thence on he journey'd o'er the fields of ice
Still north, until he met a stretching wall
Barring his way, and in the wall a grate.
Then he dismounted, and drew tight the girths,
On the smooth ice, of Sleipner, Odin's horse,
And made him leap the grate, and came within. 490
And he beheld spread round him Hela's realm,

The plains of Niflheim, where dwell the dead,
And heard the thunder of the streams of Hell.
For near the wall the river of Roaring flows,
Outmost ; the others near the centre run—
The Storm, the Abyss, the Howling, and the Pain ;
These flow by Hela's throne, and near their spring.
And from the dark flock'd up the shadowy tribes :
And as the swallows crowd the bulrush-beds
Of some clear river, issuing from a lake, 500
On autumn-days, before they cross the sea ;
And to each bulrush-crest a swallow hangs
Swinging, and others skim the river-streams,
And their quick twittering fills the banks and
shores—
So around Hermod swarm'd the twittering ghosts.
Women, and infants, and young men who died
Too soon for fame, with white ungraven shields ;
And old men, known to glory, but their star
Betray'd them, and of wasting age they died,
Not wounds ; yet, dying, they their armour wore, 510
And now have chief regard in Hela's realm.
Behind flock'd wrangling up a piteous crew,
Greeted of none, disfeatur'd and forlorn—
Cowards, who were in sloughs interr'd alive ;
And round them still the wattled hurdles hung,
Wherewith they stamp'd them down, and trod them
deep,
To hide their shameful memory from men,

But all he pass'd unhail'd, and reach'd the throne
Of Hela, and saw, near it, Balder crown'd,
And Hela sat thereon, with countenance stern, 520
And thus bespake him first the solemn Queen:—

‘ Unhappy, how hast thou endur'd to leave
The light, and journey to the cheerless land
Where idly flit about the feeble shades ?
How didst thou cross the bridge o'er Giall's stream,
Being alive, and come to Ocean's shore ?
Or how o'erleap the grate that bars the wall ? ’

She spake: but down off Sleipner Hermod
sprang,
And fell before her feet, and clasp'd her knees ;
And spake, and mild entreated her, and said:— 530

‘ O Hela, wherefore should the Gods declare
Their errands to each other, or the ways
They go ? the errand and the way is known.
Thou know'st, thou know'st, what grief we have in
Heaven

For Balder, whom thou hold'st by right below :
Restore him ! for what part fulfils he here ?
Shall he shed cheer over the cheerless seats,
And touch the apathetic ghosts with joy ?
Not for such end, O Queen, thou hold'st thy
realm.

For Heaven was Balder born, the city of Gods 540
And Heroes, where they live in light and joy :
Thither restore him, for his place is there.’

He spoke ; and grave replied the solemn queen :—
' Hermod, for he thou art, thou son of Heaven !
A strange, unlikely errand, sure, is thine.
Do the Gods send to me to make them blest ?
Small bliss my race hath of the Gods obtain'd.
Three mighty children to my father Lok
Did Angerbode, the giantess, bring forth—
Fenris the wolf, the serpent huge, and me. 550
Of these the serpent in the sea ye cast,
Who since in your despite hath wax'd amain,
And now with gleaming ring enfolds the world ;
Me on this cheerless nether world ye threw,
And gave me nine unlighted realms to rule ;
While on his island in the lake afar,
Made fast to the bor'd crag, by wile not strength
Subdu'd, with limber chains lives Fenris bound.
Lok still subsists in Heaven, our father wise,
Your mate, though loath'd, and feasts in Odin's hall ; 560
But him too foes await, and netted snares,
And in a cave a bed of needle-rocks,
And o'er his visage serpents dropping gall.
Yet he shall one day rise, and burst his bonds,
And with himself set us his offspring free,
When he guides Muspel's children to their bourne.
Till then in peril or in pain we live,
Wrought by the Gods : and ask the Gods our aid ?
Howbeit, we abide our day ; till then,
We do not, as some feeble haters do 570

Seek to afflict our foes with petty pangs,
Helpless to better us, or ruin them.
Come then ; if Balder was so dear belov'd,
And this is true, and such a loss is Heaven's—
Hear, how to Heaven may Balder be restor'd.
Show me through all the world the signs of grief :
Fails but one thing to grieve, here Balder stops :
Let all that lives and moves upon the earth
Weep him, and all that is without life weep ;
Let Gods, men, brutes, bewEEP him ; plants 580
and stones.

So shall I know the lost was dear indeed,
And bend my heart, and give him back to Heaven.'

She spake ; and Hermod answer'd her, and
said :—

'Hela, such as thou say'st, the terms shall be.
But come, declare me this, and truly tell :
May I, ere I depart, bid Balder hail ?
Or is it here withheld to greet the dead ?'

He spake, and straightway Hela answer'd
him :—

'Hermod, greet Balder if thou wilt, and hold
Converse ; his speech remains, though he be dead.' 590

And straight to Balder Hermod turn'd, and
spake :—

'Even in the abode of death, O Balder, hail !
Thou hear'st, if hearing, like as speech, is thine,
The terms of thy releasement hence to Heaven ;

Fear nothing but that all shall be fulfill'd.
For not unmindful of thee are the Gods,
Who see the light, and blest in Asgard dwell ;
Even here they seek thee out, in Hela's realm.
And sure of all the happiest far art thou
Who ever have been known in earth or Heaven ; 600
Alive, thou wert of Gods the most lov'd,
And now thou sittest crown'd by Hela's side,
Here, and hast honour among all the dead.'

He spake ; and Balder utter'd him reply,
But feebly, as a voice far off ; he said :—

' Hermod the nimble, gild me not my death.
Better to live a slave, a captur'd man,
Who scatters rushes in a master's hall,
Than be a crown'd king here, and rule the dead.
And now I count not of these terms as safe 610
To be fulfill'd, nor my return as sure,
Though I be lov'd, and many mourn my death ;
For double-minded ever was the seed
Of Lok, and double are the gifts they give.
Howbeit, report thy message ; and therewith,
To Odin, to my father, take this ring,
Memorial of me, whether sav'd or no ;
And tell the Heaven-born Gods how thou hast seen
Me sitting here below by Hela's side,
'Crown'd, having honour among all the dead.' 620

He spake, and rais'd his hand, and gave the ring.
And with inscrutable regard the Queen

Of Hell beheld them, and the ghosts stood dumb.
But Hermod took the ring, and yet once more
Kneel'd and did homage to the solemn Queen ;
Then mounted Sleipner, and set forth to ride
Back, through the astonish'd tribes of dead, to Heaven.
And to the wall he came, and found the grate
Lifted, and issued on the fields of ice ;
And o'er the ice he far'd to Ocean's strand, 630
And up from thence, a wet and misty road,
To the arm'd damsel's bridge, and Giall's stream.
Worse was that way to go than to return,
For him : for others all return is barr'd.
Nine days he took to go, two to return ;
And on the twelfth morn saw the light of Heaven.
And as a traveller in the early dawn
To the steep edge of some great valley comes,
Through which a river flows, and sees, beneath,
Clouds of white rolling vapours fill the vale, 640
But o'er them, on the farther slope, descries
Vineyards, and crofts, and pastures, bright with sun—
So Hermod, o'er the fog between, saw Heaven.
And Sleipner snorted, for he smelt the air
Of Heaven ; and mightily, as wing'd, he flew.
And Hermod saw the towers of Asgard rise ;
And he drew near, and heard no living voice
In Asgard ; and the golden halls were dumb.
Then Hermod knew what labour held the Gods ;
And through the empty streets he rode, and pass'd 650

‘ Deceiver, fair in form, but false in heart !
 Enemy, mocker, whom, though Gods, we hate—
 Peace, lest our father Odin hear thee gibe !
 Would I might see him snatch thee in his hand,
 And bind thy carcase, like a bale, with cords,
 And hurl thee in a lake, to sink or swim !
 If clear from plotting Balder’s death, to swim ;
 But deep, if thou devisedst it, to drown, 680
 And perish, against fate, before thy day ! ’

So they two soft to one another spake.
 But Odin look’d toward the land, and saw
 His messenger ; and he stood forth, and cried :
 And Hermod came, and leapt from Sleipner down,
 And in his father’s hand put Sleipner’s rein,
 And greeted Odin and the Gods, and said :—

‘ Odin, my father, and ye, Gods of Heaven !
 Lo, home, having perform’d your will, I come.
 Into the joyless kingdom have I been, 690
 Below, and look’d upon the shadowy tribes
 Of ghosts, and communed with their solemn Queen ;
 And to your prayer she sends you this reply :
Show her through all the world the signs of grief :
Fails but one thing to grieve, there Balder stops.
Let Gods, men, brutes, beweeep him ; plants and stones :
So shall she know your loss was dear indeed,
And bend her heart, and give you Balder back.’

He spoke ; and all the Gods to Odin look’d ;
 And straight the Father of the ages said :— 700

‘ Ye Gods, these terms may keep another day.
But now, put on your arms, and mount your steeds
And in procession all come near, and weep
Balder ; for that is what the dead desire.
When ye enough have wept, then build a pile
Of the heap’d wood, and burn his corpse with fire
Out of our sight ; that we may turn from grief,
And lead, as erst, our daily life in Heaven.’

He spoke, and the Gods arm’d ; and Odin donn’d
His dazzling corslet and his helm of gold, 710
And led the way on Sleipner ; and the rest
Follow’d, in tears, their Father and their King.
And thrice in arms around the dead they rode,
Weeping ; the sands were wetted, and their arms,
With their thick-falling tears : so good a friend
They mourn’d that day, so bright, so lov’d a God.
And Odin came, and laid his kingly hands
On Balder’s breast, and thus began the wail :—

‘ Farewell, O Balder, bright and lov’d, my son !
In that great day, the twilight of the Gods, 720
When Muspel’s children shall beleague Heaven,
Then we shall miss thy counsel and thy arm.’

Thou camest near the next, O warrior Thor !
Shouldering thy hammer, in thy chariot drawn,
Swaying the long-hair’d goats with silver’d rein ;
And over Balder’s corpse these words didst say :

‘ Brother, thou dwellest in the darksome land,
And talkest with the feeble tribes of ghosts,

Now, and I know not how they prize thee there,
But here, I know, thou wilt be miss'd and mourn'd. 730
For haughty spirits and high wraths are rife
Among the Gods and Heroes here in Heaven,
As among those whose joy and work is war ;
And daily strifes arise, and angry words :
But from thy lips, O Balder, night or day,
Heard no one ever an injurious word
To God or Hero, but thou kepest back
The others, labouring to compose their brawls.
Be ye then kind, as Balder too was kind !
For we lose him, who smooth'd all strife in 740
Heaven.'

He spake : and all the Gods assenting wail'd,
And Freya next came nigh, with golden tears ;
The loveliest Goddess she in Heaven, by all
Most honour'd after Freya, Odin's wife :
Her long ago the wandering Oder took
To mate, but left her to roam distant lands ;
Since then she seeks him, and weeps tears of gold :
Names hath she many ; Vanadis on earth
They call her, Freya is her name in Heaven ;
She in her hands took Balder's head and spake : 750

' Balder, my brother, thou art gone a road
Unknown and long, and haply on that way
My long-lost wandering Oder thou hast met,
For in the paths of Heaven he is not found.
Oh, if it be so, tell him what thou wert

To his neglected wife, and what he is,
 And wring his heart with shame, to hear thy word.
 For he, my husband, left me here to pine,
 Not long a wife, when his unquiet heart
 First drove him from me into distant lands. 760
 Since then I vainly seek him through the world,
 And weep from shore to shore my golden tears,
 But neither god nor mortal heeds my pain.
 Thou only, Balder, wast for ever kind,
 To take my hand, and wipe my tears, and say :
Weep not, O Freya, weep no golden tears !
One day the wandering Oder will return,
Or thou wilt find him in thy faithful search
On some great road, or resting in an inn
Or at a ford, or sleeping by a tree. 770
 So Balder said ;—but Oder, well I know,
 My truant Oder I shall see no more
 To the world's end ; and Balder now is gone,
 And I am left uncomfited in Heaven.'

She spake ; and all the Goddesses bewail'd.
 Last, from among the Herces one came near,
 No God, but of the hero-troop the chief—
 Regner, who swept the northern sea with fleets,
 And ruled o'er Denmark and the heathy isles,
 Living ; but Ella captur'd him and slew ;— 780
 A king whose fame then fill'd the vast of Heaven,
 Now time obscures it, and men's later deeds :
 He last approach'd the corpse, and spake and said :—

' Balder, there yet are many Scalds in Heaven
 Still left, and that chief Scald, thy brother Brage,
 Whom we may bid to sing, though thou art gone :
 And all these gladly, while we drink, we hear,
 After the feast is done, in Odin's hall ;
 But they harp ever on one string, and wake
 Remembrance in our soul of wars alone, 790
 Such as on earth we valiantly have wag'd,
 And blood, and ringing blows, and violent death :
 But when thou sangest, Balder, thou didst strike
 Another note, and, like a bird in spring,
 Thy voice of joyance minded us, and youth,
 And wife, and children, and our ancient home.
 Yes, and I, too, remember'd then no more
 My dungeon, where the serpents stung me dead,
 Nor Ella's victory on the English coast ;
 But I heard Thora laugh in Gothland Isle, 800
 And saw my shepherdess, Aslauga, tend
 Her flock along the white Norwegian beach :
 Tears started to mine eyes with yearning joy :
 Therefore with grateful heart I mourn thee dead.'

So Regner spake, and all the Heroes groan'd.
But now the sun had pass'd the height of Heaven.
And soon had all that day been spent in wail ;
But then the Father of the ages said :—

‘Ye Gods, there well may be too much of wail.
Bring now the gather’d wood to Balder’s ship ; 810
Heap on the deck the logs, and build the pyre.’

But when the Gods and Heroes heard, they brought
The wood to Balder's ship, and built a pile,
Full the deck's breadth, and lofty ; then the corpse
Of Balder on the highest top they laid,
With Nanna on his right, and on his left
Hoder, his brother, whom his own hand slew.
And they set jars of wine and oil to lean
Against the bodies, and stuck torches near,
Splinters of pine-wood, soak'd with turpentine ; 820
And brought his arms and gold, and all his stuff ,
And slew the dogs who at his table fed,
And his horse, Balder's horse, whom most he lov'd,
And placed them on the pyre, and Odin threw
A last choice gift thereon, his golden ring.
They fixt the mast, and hoisted up the sails,
Then they put fire to the wood ; and Thor
Set his stout shoulder hard against the stern
To push the ship through the thick sand : sparks flew
From the deep trench she plough'd—so 830
 strong a God
Furrow'd it—and the water gurgled in.
And the ship floated on the waves, and rock'd.
But in the hills a strong east-wind arose,
And came down moaning to the sea ; first squalls
Ran black o'er the sea's face, then steady rush'd
The breeze, and fill'd the sails, and blew the fire.
And wreath'd in smoke the ship stood out to sea.
Soon with a roaring rose the mighty fire,

And the pile crackled ; and between the logs
Sharp quivering tongues of flame shot out, and 840
 leapt

Curling and darting, higher, until they lick'd
The summit of the pile, the dead, the mast,
And ate the shrivelling sails ; but still the ship
Drove on, ablaze above her hull with fire.
And the Gods stood upon the beach, and gaz'd.
And while they gaz'd, the sun went lurid down
Into the smoke-wrapt sea, and night came on.
Then the wind fell, with night, and there was calm ;
But through the dark they watch'd the burning
 ship

Still carried o'er the distant waters on, 850
Farther and farther, like an eye of fire.
And as in the dark night a travelling man
Who bivouacs in a forest 'mid the hills,
Sees suddenly a spire of flame shoot up
Out of the black waste forest, far below,
Which wood-cutters have lighted near their lodge
Against the wolves ; and all night long it flares:—
So flar'd, in the far darkness, Balder's pyre.
But fainter, as the stars rose high, it burn'd ;
The bodies were consum'd, ash chok'd the pile. 860
And as, in a decaying winter-fire,
A charr'd log, falling, makes a shower of sparks—
So with a shower of sparks the pile fell in,
Reddening the sea around ; and all was dark.

But the Gods went by starlight up the shore
 To Asgard, and sate down in Odin's hall
 At table, and the funeral-feast began.
 All night they ate the boar Serimner's flesh,
 And from their horns, with silver rimm'd, drank
 mead,

Silent, and waited for the sacred morn. 870

And morning over all the world was spread.
 Then from their loathed feast the Gods arose,
 And took their horses, and set forth to ride
 O'er the bridge Bifrost, where is Heimdall's watch,
 To the ash Igdrasil, and Ida's plain ;
 Thor came on foot, the rest on horseback rode.
 And they found Mimir sitting by his fount
 Of wisdom, which beneath the ashtree springs,
 And saw the Nornies watering the roots
 Of that world-shadowing tree with honey-dew : 880
 There came the Gods, and sate them down on stones ;
 And thus the Father of the ages said :—

‘ Ye Gods, the terms ye know, which Hermod
 brought.

Accept them or reject them ; both have grounds.
 Accept them, and they bind us, unfulfill'd,
 To leave for ever Balder in the grave,
 An unrecover'd prisoner, shade with shades.
 But how, ye say, should the fulfilment fail ? —
 Smooth sound the terms, and light to be fulfill'd ;
 For dear-beloved was Balder while he liv'd 890

In Heaven and earth, and who would grudge him
tears ?

But from the traitorous seed of Lok they come,
These terms, and I suspect some hidden fraud.
Bethink ye, Gods, is there no other way ?—
Speak, were not this a way, the way for Gods ?—
If I, if Odin, clad in radiant arms,
Mounted on Sleipner, with the warrior Thor
Drawn in his car beside me, and my sons,
All the strong brood of Heaven, to swell my train,
Should make irruption into Hela's realm, 900
And set the fields of gloom ablaze with light,
And bring in triumph Balder back to Heaven ? '

He spake, and his fierce sons applauded loud.
But Freya, mother of the Gods, arose,
Daughter and wife of Odin ; thus she said :—
‘ Odin, thou whirlwind, what a threat is this !
Thou threatenest what transcends thy might, even
thine.

For of all powers the mightiest far art thou,
Lord over men on earth, and Gods in Heaven ;
Yet even from thee thyself hath been withheld 910
One thing—to undo what thou thyself hast rul'd.
For all which hath been fixt, was fixt by thee :
In the beginning, ere the Gods were born,
Before the Heavens were builded, thou didst slay
The giant Ymir, whom the abyss brought forth,
Thou and thy brethren fierce, the sons of Bor,

And cast his trunk to choke the abysmal void :
But of his flesh and members thou didst build
The Earth and Ocean, and above them Heaven :
And from the flaming world, where Muspel reigns, 920
Thou sent'st and fetched'st fire, and madest lights,
Sun, moon, and stars, which thou hast hung in Heaven,
Dividing clear the paths of night and day :
And Asgard thou didst build, and Midgard fort ;
Then me thou mad'st ; of us the Gods were born :
Last, walking by the sea, thou foundest spars
Of wood, and framed'st men, who till the earth,
Or on the sea, the field of pirates, sail :
And all the race of Ymir thou didst drown,
Save one, Bergelmer ; he on shipboard fled 930
Thy deluge, and from him the giants sprang ;
But all that brood thou hast remov'd far off,
And set by Ocean's utmost marge to dwell ;
But Hela into Niflheim thou threw'st,
And gav'st her nine unlighted worlds to rule,
A queen, and empire over all the dead.
That empire wilt thou now invade, light up
Her darkness, from her grasp a subject tear ?—
Try it ; but I, for one, will not applaud.
Nor do I merit, Odin, thou should'st slight 940
Me and my words, though thou be first in Heaven ;
For I too am a Goddess, born of thee,
Thine eldest, and of me the Gods are sprung ;
And all that is to come I know, but lo

In mine own breast, and have to none reveal'd.
Come then ; since Hela holds by right her prey,
But offers terms for his release to Heaven,
Accept the chance ;—thou caust no more obtain.
Send through the world thy messengers ; entreat
All living and unliving things to weep 950
For Balder ; if thou haply thus mayst melt
Hela, and win the loved one back to Heaven.'

She spake, and on her face let fall her veil,
And bow'd her head, and satæ with folded hands.
Nor did the all-ruling Odin slight her word ;
Straightway he spake, and thus address'd the Gods :

' Go quickly forth through all the world, and pray
All living and unliving things to weep
Balder, if haply he may thus be won.'

When the Gods heard, they straight arose, and 960
took

Their horses, and rode forth through all the world ;
North, south, east, west, they struck, and roam'd
the world,

Entreating all things to weep Balder's death :
And all that lived, and all without life, wept.
And as in winter, when the frost breaks up,
At winter's end, before the spring begins,
And a warm west-wind blows, and thaw sets in—
After an hour a dripping sound is heard
In all the forests, and the soft-strewn snow
Under the trees is dibbled thick with holes, 970

And from the boughs the snowloads shuffle down ;
 And, in fields sloping to the south, dark plots
 Of grass peep out amid surrounding snow,
 And widen, and the peasant's heart is glad—
 So through the world was heard a dripping noise
 Of all things weeping to bring Balder back ;
 And there fell joy upon the Gods to hear.

But Hermod rode with Niord, whom he took
 To show him spits and beaches of the sea
 Far off, where some unwarn'd might fail to weep— 980
 Niord, the God of storms, whom fishers know ;
 Not born in Heaven ; he was in Vanheim rear'd,
 With men, but lives a hostage with the Gods ;
 He knows each frith, and every rocky creek
 Fringed with dark pines, and sands where sea-fowl
 scream :—

They two scour'd every coast, and all things wept.
 And they rode home together, through the wood
 Of Jarnvid, which to east of Midgard lies
 Bordering the giants, where the trees are iron ;
 'There in the wood before a cave they came, 990
 Where sate, in the cave's mouth, a skinny hag,
 Toothless and old ; she gibes the passers by :
 'Thok is she call'd, but now Lok wore her shape ;
 She greeted them the first, and laugh'd, and said :—
 ' Ye Gods, good lack, is it so dull in Heaven,
 That ye come pleasur'ing to Thok's iron wood ?
 Lovers of change ye are, fastidious sprites.

Look, as in some boor's yard a sweet-breath'd cow,
Whose manger is stuff'd full of good fresh hay,
Snuffs at it daintily, and stoops her head 1000
To chew the straw, her litter, at her feet—
So ye grow sqneamish, Gods, and sniff at Heaven !'

She spake ; but Hermod answer'd her and said :—
' Thok, not for gibes we come, we come for tears.
Balder is dead, and Hela holds her prey,
But will restore, if all things give him tears.
Begrudge not thine ! to all was Balder dear.'

Then, with a louder laugh, the hag replied :—
' Is Balder dead ? and do ye come for tears ?
Thok with dry eyes will weep o'er Balder's pyre. 1010
Weep him all other things, if weep they will—
I weep him not : let Hela keep her prey !'

She spake, and to the cavern's depth she fled,
Mocking : and Hermod knew their toil was vain.
And as seafaring men, who long have wrought
In the great deep for gain, at last come home,
And towards evening see the headlands rise
Of their own country, and can clear descry
A fire of wither'd furze which boys have lit
Upon the cliffs, or smoke of burning weeds 1020
Out of a till'd field inland ;—then the wind
Catches them, and drives out again to sea ;
And they go long days tossing up and down
Over the grey sea-ridges, and the glimpse
Of port they had makes bitterer far their toil—

So the Gods' cross was bitterer for their joy.

Then, sad at heart, to Niord Hermod spake:—

' It is the accuser Lok, who flouts us all.

Ride back, and tell in Heaven this heavy news,

I must again below, to Hela's realm.' 1030

He spoke ; and Niord set forth back to Heaven.

But northward Hermod rode, the way below,

The way he knew ; and travers'd Giall's stream,

And down to Ocean grop'd, and cross'd the ice,

And came beneath the wall, and found the grate

Still lifted ; well was his return foreknown.

And once more Hermod saw around him spread

The joyless plains, and heard the streams of Hell.

But as he enter'd, on the extremest bound

Of Nifheim, he saw one ghost come near, 1040

Hovering, and stopping oft, as if afraid—

Hoder, the unhappy, whom his own hand slew :

And Hermod look'd, and knew his brother's ghost,

And call'd him by his name, and sternly said:—

' Hoder, ill-fated, blind in heart and eyes !

Why tarriest thou to plunge thee in the gulf

Of the deep inner gloom, but flittest here,

In twilight, on the lonely verge of Hell,

Far from the other ghosts, and Hela's throne ?

Doubtless thou fearest to meet Balder's voice, 1050

Thy brother, whom through folly thou didst slay.'

He spoke ; but Hoder answer'd him, and said:—

' Hermod the nimble, dost thou still pursue

The unhappy with reproach, even in the grave ?
For this I died, and fled beneath the gloom,
Not daily to endure abhorring Gods,
Nor with a hateful presence cumber Heaven—
And canst thou not, even here, pass pitying by ?
No less than Balder have I lost the light
Of Heaven, and communion with my kin ; 1060
I too had once a wife, and once a child,
And substance, and a golden house in Heaven—
But all I left of my own act, and fled
Below, and dost thou hate me even here ?
Balder upbraids me not, nor hates at all,
Though he has cause, have any cause ; but he,
When that with downcast looks I hither came,
Stretch'd forth his hand, and with benignant voice,
Welcome, he said, if there be welcome here,
Brother and fellow-sport of Lok with me ! 1070
And not to offend thee, Hermod, nor to force
My hated converse on thee, came I up
From the deep gloom, where I will now return ;
But earnestly I long'd to hover near,
Not too far off, when that thou camest by ;
To feel the presence of a brother God,
And hear the passage of a horse of Heaven,
For the last time : for here thou com'st no more.'

He spake, and turn'd to go to the inner gloom.
But Hermod stay'd him with mild words, and 1080
said :—

‘ Thou doest well to chide me, Hoder blind !
 Truly thou say’st, the planning guilty mind
 Was Lok’s ; the unwitting hand alone was thine.
 But Gods are like the sons of men in this—
 When they have woe, they blame the nearest cause.
 Howbeit stay, and be appeas’d ; and tell—
 Sits Balder still in pomp by Hela’s side,
 Or is he mingled with the unnumber’d dead ? ’

And the blind Hoder answer’d him and spake :—
 ‘ His place of state remains by Hela’s side, 1090
 But empty ; for his wife, for Nanna came
 Lately below, and join’d him ; and the pair
 Frequent the still recesses of the realm
 Of Hela, and hold converse undisturb’d.
 But they too, doubtless, will have breath’d the balm,
 Which floats before a visitant from Heaven,
 And have drawn upward to this verge of Hell.’

He spake ; and, as he ceas’d, a puff of wind
 Roll’d heavily the leaden mist aside
 Round where they stood, and they beheld 1100
 two forms

Make towards them o’er the stretching cloudy plain.
 And Hermod straight perceiv’d them, who they were,
 Balder and Nanna ; and to Balder said :—

‘ Balder, too truly thou foresaw’st a snare !
 Lok triumphs still, and Hela keeps her prey.
 No more to Asgard shalt thou come, nor lodge
 In thy own house, Breidablik, nor enjoy

The love all bear toward thee, nor train up
Forset, thy son, to be belov'd like thee.
Here must thou lie, and wait an endless age. 1110
Therefore for the last time, O Balder, hail !'

He spake : and Balder answer'd him, and said :—
'Hail and farewell ! for here thou com'st no more.
Yet mourn not for me, Hermod, when thou sitt'st
In Heaven, nor let the other Gods lament,
As wholly to be pitied, quite forlorn,
For Nanna hath rejoin'd me, who, of old,
In Heaven, was seldom parted from my side ;
And still the acceptance follows me, which crown'd
My former life, and cheers me even here. 1120
'The iron frown of Hela is relax'd
When I draw nigh, and the wan tribes of dead
'Trust me, and gladly bring for my award
'Their ineffectual feuds and feeble hates,
Shadows of hates, but they distress them still.'

And the fleet-footed Hermod made reply :—
'Thou hast then all the solace death allows,
Esteem and function ; and so far is well.
Yet here thou liest, Balder, underground,
Rusting for ever ; and the years roll on, 1130
The generations pass, the ages grow,
And bring us nearer to the final day
When from the south shall march the fiery band
And cross the bridge of Heaven, with Lok for guide,
And Fenris at his heel with broken chain ;

While from the east the giant Rymer steers
His ship, and the great serpent makes to land ;
And all are marshall'd in one flaming square
Against the Gods, upon the plains of Heaven,
I mourn thee, that thou canst not help us then.' 1140

He spake ; but Balder answer'd him, and said :—
'Mourn not for me ! Mourn, Hermod, for the Gods ;
Mourn for the men on earth, the Gods in Heaven,
Who live, and with their eyes shall see that day.
The day will come, when Asgard's towers shall fall,
And Odin, and his sons, the seed of Heaven ;
But what were I, to save them in that hour ?
If strength might save them, could not Odin save,
My father, and his pride, the warrior Thor,
Vidar the silent, the impetuous Tyr ? 1150
I, what were I, when these can nought avail ?
Yet, doubtless, when the day of battle comes,
And the two hosts are marshall'd, and in Heaven
The golden-crested cock shall sound alarm,
And his black brother-bird from hence reply,
And bucklers clash, and spears begin to pour—
Longing will stir within my breast, though vain.
But not to me so grievous, as, I know,
To other Gods it were, is my enforced
Absence from fields where I could nothing aid ; 1160
For I am long since weary of your storm
Of carnage, and find, Hermod, in your life
Something too much of war and broils, which make

Life one perpetual fight, a bath of blood.
Mine eyes are dizzy with the arrowy hail ;
Mine ears are stunn'd with blows, and sick for calm.
Inactive, therefore, let me lie, in gloom,
Unarm'd, inglorious ; I attend the course
Of ages, and my late return to light,
In times less alien to a spirit mild, 1170
In new-recover'd seats, the happier day.'

He spake ; and the fleet Hermod thus replied :—
' Brother, what seats are these, what happier day
Tell me, that I may ponder it when gone.'

And the ray-crowned Balder answer'd him :—
' Far to the south, beyond the blue, there spreads
Another Heaven, the boundless : no one yet
Hath reach'd it ; there hereafter shall arise
The second Asgard, with another name.
Thither, when o'er this present earth and Heavens 1180
The tempest of the latter days hath swept,
And they from sight have disappear'd, and sunk,
Shall a small remnant of the Gods repair ;
Hoder and I shall join them from the grave.
There re-assembling we shall see emerge
From the bright Ocean at our feet an earth
More fresh, more verdant than the last, with fruits
Self-springing, and a seed of man preserv'd,
Who then shall live in peace, as now in war.
But we in Heaven shall find again with joy 1190
The ruin'd palaces of Odin, seats

Familiar, halls where we have supp'd of old ;
Re-enter them with wonder, never fill
Our eyes with gazing, and rebuild with tears.
And we shall tread once more the well-known plain
Of Ida, and among the grass shall find
The golden dice with which we play'd of yore ;
And that will bring to mind the former life
And pastime of the Gods, the wise discourse
Of Odin, the delights of other days. 1200
O Hermod, pray that thou mayst join us then !
Such for the future is my hope ; meanwhile,
I rest the thrall of Hela, and endure
Death, and the gloom which round me even now
Thickens, and to its inner gulf recalls.
Farewell, for longer speech is not allow'd.'

He spoke, and wav'd farewell, and gave his hand
To Nanna ; and she gave their brother blind
Her hand, in turn, for guidance ; and the three
Departed o'er the cloudy plain, and soon 1210
Faded from sight into the interior gloom.
But Hermod stood beside his drooping horse,
Mute, gazing after them in tears ; and fain,
Fain had he follow'd their receding steps,
Though they to death were bound, and he to Heaven,
Then ; but a Power he could not break withheld.
And as a stork which idle boys have trapp'd,
And tied him in a yard, at autumn sees
Flocks of his kind pass flying o'er his head

To warmer lands, and coasts that keep the sun ;— 1220
He strains to join their flight, and from his shed
Follows them with a long complaining cry—
So Hermod gazed, and yearn'd to join his kin.

At last he sigh'd, and set forth back to Heaven.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM:

AN EPISODE

And the first grey of morning fill'd the east,
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hush'd, and still the men were plunged in sleep :
Sohrab alone, he slept not ; all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed ;
But when the grey dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog, 10
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.

Through the black Tartar tents he pass'd, which
stood

Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere :
Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,

And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink—the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crown'd the top 20
With a clay fort ; but that was fall'n ; and now
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick-piled carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dull'd; for he slept light, an old man's sleep ;
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said :— 30

“ Who art thou ? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak ! is there news, or any night alarm ? ”

But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said :—
“ Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa ! it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep ; but I sleep not ; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army march'd ; 40
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan first
I came among the Tartars, and bore arms,
I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,

At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
This too thou know'st, that, while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,
I seek one man, one man, and one alone—
Rustum, my father ; who I hoped should greet, 50
Should, one day greet, upon some well-fought field,
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hoped, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
Let the two armies rest to-day ; but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man ; if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it ; if I fall—
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumour of a common fight, 60
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk :
But of a single combat fame speaks clear."

He spoke ; and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said :—
" O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine !
Can'st thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press for ever first,
In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen ? 70
That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring ; in our tents, while it is war,

And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum—seek him not through fight :
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son !
But far hence seek him, for he is not here.
For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every fray : 80
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old.
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age ;
Or in some quarrel with the Persian King.
There go !—Thou wilt not ? Yet my heart forebodes
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us ; fain therefore send thee hence, in peace
To seek thy father, not seek single fights 90
In vain ;—but who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son ?
Go : I will grant thee what thy heart desires."

So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay,
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword ;
And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap, 100

Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul :
And rais'd the curtain of his tent, and call'd
His herald to his side, and went abroad.

The sun by this had risen, and clear'd the fog
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands :
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed
Into the open plain ; so Haman bade—
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they 110
stream'd ;

As when, some grey November morn, the files,
In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes
Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some froze Caspian reed-bed, southward bound
For the warm Persian sea-board—so they stream'd.
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long
spears ;

Large men, large steeds ; who from Bokhara come
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares. 120
Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands ;
Light men and on light steeds, who only drink
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came

From far, and a more doubtful service own'd ;
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards
And close-set skull-caps ; and those wilder hordes 130
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,
Kalmuks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere—
These all filed out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians form'd ;—
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,
The Ilyats of Khorassan ; and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel. 140
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they
stood.
And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said :—
“ Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear ! 150
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man.”

As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.

But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool, 160
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighbouring mountain of milk snow ;
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of travelling birds dead on the snow,
Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries—
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows—
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.

And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up 170
To counsel ; Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the King ;
These came and counsell'd, and then Gudurz said :—

“ Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up.
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night ; aloof he sits
And sullen, and has pitch'd his tents apart.
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear 180
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name.

Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up."

So spake he ; and Ferood stood forth and cried :—
" Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said.
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man."

He spoke ; and Peran-Wisa turn'd, and strode
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd, 190
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,
Just pitch'd : the high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around.
And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum : his morn'ing meal was done, but still
The table stood before him, charged with food—
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark green melons ; and there Rustum sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist, 200
And play'd with it ; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him ; and he look'd, and saw him stand,
And with a cry sprang up and dropp'd the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said :—

"Welcome ! these eyes could see no better sight.
What news ? but sit down first, and eat and drink."

But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said :—
" Not now : a time will come to eat and drink,
But not to-day ; to-day has other needs.

The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze ; 210
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion—and thou know'st his
name—

Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's !
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart ;
And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old
Or else too weak ; and all eyes turn to thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose ! ”

He spoke ; but Rustum answer'd with a
smile :—

220

“ Go to ! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older ; if the young are weak, the King
Errs strangely ; for the king, for Kai Khosroo,
Himself is young, and honours younger men,
And lets the aged moulder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young—
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame ?
For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I have— 230
A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
And he has none to guard his weak old age.

There would I go, and hang my armour up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings, 240
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no
more."

He spoke, and smiled ; and Gudurz made reply :—
" What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face ? Take heed lest men should say :
Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men."

And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply :—
" O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words ? 250
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me ?
Are not they mortal, am not I myself ?
But who for men of nought would do great deeds ?
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame.
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms ;
Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd
In single fight with any mortal man."

He spoke, and frown'd ; and Gudurz turn'd, and 260
ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy—

Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and call'd
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel ; the arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And, from the fluted spine atop, a plume
Of horsehair waved, a scarlet horsehair plume.
So arm'd, he issued forth ; and Ruksh, his horse, 270
Follow'd him like a faithful hound at heel—
Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the
earth,

The horse whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And rear'd him ; a bright bay, with lofty crest ;
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know :
So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd 280
The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hail'd ; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,

Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came. 290

And Rustum to the Persian front advanced,
And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.
And as afield the reapers cut a swathe
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And on each side are squares of standing corn,
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare—
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes towards the Tartar tents, and saw 300
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.

As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire—
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers the whiten'd window panes—
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be ; so Rustum eyed
The unknown adventurous Youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth 310
All the most valiant chiefs ; long he perused
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.
For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd ;
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its light dark shadow on the moonlit turf,

By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound—
So slender Sohrab seem'd, so softly rear'd.

And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul

As he beheld him coming ; and he stood, 320

And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said :—

“ O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant ; but the grave is cold.
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.

Behold me ! I am vast, and clad in iron,

And tried : and I have stood on many a field

Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe—

Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.

O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death ?

Be govern'd ! quit the Tartar host, and come 330

To Iran, and be as my son to me,

And fight beneath my banner till I die !

There are no youths in Iran brave as thou.”

So he spake, mildly : Sohrab heard his voice,

The mighty voice of Rustum ; and he saw

His giant figure planted on the sand,

Sole, like some single tower, which a chief

Has builded on the waste in former years

Against the robbers ; and he saw that head,

Streak'd with its first grey hairs ;—hope filled 340

his soul,

And he ran forwards and embraced his knees,

And clasp'd his hand within his own and said :—

“ Oh, by thy father's head ! by thine own soul !

'Art thou not Rustum ? speak ! art thou not he ? "

But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,
And turn'd away, and spoke to his own soul:—

" Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean.
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.

For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say—*Rusium is here*— 350

He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.

And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall,
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry—

' I challenged once, when the two armies camp'd
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight ; but they
Shrank ; only Rustum dared : then he and I 360
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.'

So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud ;
Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me."

And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud:—

" Rise ! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum ? I am here, whom thou hast call'd
By challenge forth ; make good thy vaunt, or yield.
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight ?

Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee.
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand 370
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,

There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this ;
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul :
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt, and yield ;
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer floods,
Oxus in summer wash them all away."

He spoke : and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet :—
" Art thou so fierce ? Thou wilt not fright me so. 380
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
Begin : thou art more vast, more dread than I,
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young—
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea, 390
Poised on the top of a huge wave of Fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know :
Only the event will teach us in its hour."

He spoke ; and Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd
His spear ; down from the shoulder, down it came,

As on some partridge in the corn a hawk 400
That long has tower'd in the airy clouds
Drops like a plummet ; Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash ; the spear
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide :—then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield : sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he
Could wield : an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough ; like those which men in treeless plains 410
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
Has made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the channels with torn boughs ; so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke ; but again Sohrab sprang aside
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell 420
To his knees, and with his fingers clutch'd the sand :
And now might Sohrab have unsheath'd his sword,
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand :
But he look'd on, and smiled, nor bared his sword,
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said :—
“ Thou strik'st too hard : that club of thine will float

Upon the summer floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth : not wroth am I ;
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul. 430
Thou say'st, thou art not Rustum ; be it so.
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul ?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too ;
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men ;
But never was my heart thus touch'd before.
Are they from Heaven, these softening of the heart ?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven !
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand, 440
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang ;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou
Mayst fight ; fight *them*, when they confront thy
spear.

But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me ! "

He ceased : but while he spake, Rustum had risen,
And stood erect, trembling with rage ; his club
He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear, 450
Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn Star,
The baleful sign of fevers ; dust had soil'd
His stately crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms.

His breast heaved ; his lips foam'd ; and twice his
voice

Was choked with rage ; at last these words broke
way :—

“ Girl ! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands !
Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words !
Fight ; let me hear thy hateful voice no more !
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now 460
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to
dance ;

But on the Oxus sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war ; I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine !
Remember all thy valour ; try thy feints
And cunning ! all the pity I had is gone ;
Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles.”

He spoke, and Sohrab kindled at his taunts, 470
And he too drew his sword ; at once they rush'd
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west ; their shields
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees—such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.

And you would say that sun and stars took part 480
In that unnatural conflict ; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads ; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirwind wrapp'd the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone ;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes 490
And labouring breath ; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out ; the steel-spiked spear
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through ; but all the crest
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,
Never till now defiled, sank to the dust ;
And Rustum bow'd his head ; but then the gloom
Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air, 500
And lightnings rent the cloud ; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry—
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pain'd desert-lion, who all day
Has trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes at night to die upon the sand—
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,

And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,
And struck again ; and again Rustum bow'd 510
His head ; but this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in the hand the hilt remain'd alone.
Then Rustum raised his head ; his dreadful eyes
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted : *Rustum* !—Sohrab heard that shout
And shrank amazed : back he recoil'd one step,
And scann'd with blinking eyes the advancing form :
And then he stood bewilder'd, and he dropp'd
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side. 520
He reel'd, and staggering back, sank to the ground.
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud ; and the two armies saw the pair ;—
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.

Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began :—
“ Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse, .
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent. 530
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then that all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,

To glad thy father in his weak old age.
Fool ! thou art slain, and by an unknown man !
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old."

And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied :— 540
" Unknown thou art ; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man !
No ! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I match'd with ten such men as thou
And I were that which till to-day I was,
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that belovéd name unnerved my arm—
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall ; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe. 550
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear !
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death !
My father, whom I seek through all the world,
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee !"

As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
And follow'd her to find her where she fell 560
Far off ;—anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off describes
His huddling young left sole ; at that, he checks

His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest ; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers : never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it ; 570
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream, as she sails by—
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss—
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.

And with a cold, incredulous voice, he said :—
“ What prate is this of fathers and revenge ?
The mighty Rustum never had a son.”

And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied :—
“ Ah yes, he had ! and that lost son am I. 580
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here ;
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son !
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be !
Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen !
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells 590
With that old king, her father, who grows grey

With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honour, when the war is done.
But a dark rumour will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear ;
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more ;
But that in battle with a nameless foe, 600
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain."

He spoke ; and as he ceased, he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke ; but Rustum listen'd, plunged in thought.
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew ;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all—
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear 610
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms.
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son ;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deem'd he ; yet he listen'd, plunged in thought ;
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking Ocean sets to shore
At the full moon ; tears gather'd in his eyes ;
For he remember'd his own early youth

And all its bounding rapture ; as, at dawn, 620
The shepherd from his mountain lodge descries
A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds ;—so Rustum saw
His youth ; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom ;
And that old king, her father, who loved well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy ; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-time—
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills 630
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that Youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass—so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said :— 640
“ O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have
loved !
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false—thou art not Rustum's son :
For Rustum had no son ; one child he had—
But one—a girl ; who with her mother now

Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war.”

But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath ; for now
The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce, 650
And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die—
But first he would convince his stubborn foe ;
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said :—

“ Man, who art thou who dost deny my words ?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And falsehood, while I liv'd, was far from mine.
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore.” 660

He spoke ; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,
That the hard iron corslet clank'd aloud :
And to his heart he press'd the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said :—

“ Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie.
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son.”

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm, 670
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd ; as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,

And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands—
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die, 680
A helpless babe, among the mountain-rocks ;
Him that kind creature found, and rear'd, and loved—
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bared that figure on his arm,
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touch'd it with his hand and said :—

“ How say'st thou ? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's ? ”

He spoke ; but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood
Speechless ; and then he utter'd one sharp cry : 690
O boy—thy Father !—and his voice choked there.
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life : and life
Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,
And they stood wide with horror ; and he seized
In both his hands the dust which lay around, 700
And threw it on his head and smirch'd his hair,—
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms :

And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs choked him ; and he clutch'd his sword,
To draw it, and for ever let life out.

But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spake, and said :—

“ Father, forbear : for I but meet to-day
The doom which at my birth was written down
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious 710
hand.

Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee ; and thy heart spoke too,
I know it ! but fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel ; fate, fate engaged
The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this ! I find
My father ; let me feel that I have found !
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say : *My son !* 720
Quick ! quick ! for number'd are my sands of life,
And swift ; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away—
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind ;
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be.”

So said he, and his voice released the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth ; he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts

When they saw Rustum's grief ; and Ruksh, the
horse, 730.

With his head bowing to the ground and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one then to the other moved
His head, as if enquiring what their grief
Might mean ; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears roll'd down, and caked the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said :—

“ Ruksh, now thou grievest ; but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should first have rotted on their nimble joints,
Or ere they brought thy master to this field ! ” 740.

But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said :—
“ Is this, then, Ruksh ? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,
My terrible father's terrible horse ! and said,
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane.
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I ;
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.
'And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan, 750.

And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah ; and the aged Zal himself
Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter soak'd with wine,
And said : ‘ O Ruksh ! bear Rustum well ! ’—but I
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,

Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream ;
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand, 760
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents ; and only drunk
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir ; and this great Oxus stream—
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."

Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewail'd :—
"Oh, that its waves were flowing over me !
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head !" 770

But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied :—
" Desire not that, my father ! thou must live.
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscured, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age.
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come ! thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me ; I pray thee, slay not these !
Let me entreat for them ; what have they done ? 780
They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seistan,

And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,
Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all :
That so the passing horseman on the waste 790
May see my tomb a great way off, and cry :
Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill !
And I be not forgotten in my grave."

And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied :
"Fear not ; as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be ; for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me
And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee, 800
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host ; yea, let them go !
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace !
What should I do with slaying any more ?
For would that all whom I have ever slain
Might be once more alive—my bitterest foes, 810
And they who were call'd champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have—

And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown ;
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son !
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine ! and I might die, not thou ;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan ; 820
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine ;
And say : *O son, I weep thee not too sore,
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end.*—
But onw in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age,
And I shall never end this life of blood."

Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied :—
" A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man !
But thou shalt yet have peace ; only not now,
Not yet ! but thou shalt have it on that day, 830
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea,
From laying thy dear master in his grave."

And Rustum gazed on Sohrab's face, and said :
" Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea !
Till then, if Fate so wills, let me endure."
He spoke ; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased
His wound's imperious anguish ; but the blood 840

Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flow'd with the stream ;—all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,
By children whom their nurses call with haste
Indoors from the sun's eye ; his head droop'd low,
His limbs grew slack ; motionless, white, he lay—
White, with eyes closed ; only when heavy gasps,
Deep, heavy gasps, quivering through all his frame, 850
Convulsed him back to life, he open'd them,
And fix'd them feebly on his father's face ;
Till now all strength was ebb'd, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.

So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead.
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd 860
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now, mid their broken flights of steps,
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.

And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darken'd all ; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,

As of a great assembly loosed, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog ; for now 870
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal ;
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward ; the Tartars by the river marge ;
And Rustum and his son were left alone.

But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon ;—he flow'd
Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè, 880
Brimming, and bright, and large ; then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents ; that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles—
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer—till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright 890
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

Coventry Patmore

THE TOYS

My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
I struck him, and dismiss'd
With hard words and unkiss'd,
His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet 10
From his late sobbing wet.

And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own ;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach,
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells,
And two French copper coins, ranged there with 20
careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said :
Ah ! when at last we lie with trancèd breath,

Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less 30
Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
' I will be sorry for their childishness.'

Edwin Arnold

PRINCE SIDDÂRTHA RIDES THROUGH THE TOWN

" Good," said Siddârtha ; " let the word be sent
That Channa yoke my chariot—at noon
To-morrow I shall ride and see beyond."

Whereof they told the King: " Our Lord, thy son
Wills that his chariot be yoked at noon,
That he may ride abroad and see mankind."

" Yea!" spake the careful King, "' tis time he see ;
But let the criers go about and bid
My city deck itself, so there be met
No noisome sight ; and let none blind or maimed, 10
None that is sick, or stricken deep in years,
No leper, and no feeble folk come forth."

Therefore the stones were swept, and up and down
 The water-carriers sprinkled all the streets
 From spirting skins, the housewives scattered fresh
 Red powder on their thresholds, strung new wreaths,
 And trimmed the tulsi-bush before their doors.
 The paintings on the walls were heightened up
 With liberal brush, the trees set thick with flags,
 The idols gilded ; in the four-went ways 20
 Suryadeva and the great gods shone
 'Mid shrines of leaves ; so that the city seemed
 A capital of some enchanted land.
 Also the criers passed, with drum and gong,
 Proclaiming loudly, " Ho ! all citizens,
 The King commands that there be seen to-day
 No evil sight : let no one blind or maimed,
 None that is sick, or stricken deep in years,
 No leper, and no feeble folk, go forth.
 Let none, too, burn his dead nor bring them out 30
 'Till nightfall. Thus Suddhâdana commands."

So all was comely and the houses trim
 Throughout Kapilavastu, while the Prince
 Came forth in painted car, which two steers drew,
 Snow-white, with swinging dewlaps, and huge humps
 Wrinkled against the carved and lacquered yoke.
 Goodly it was to mark the people's joy
 Greeting their Prince ; and glad Siddârtha waxed
 At sight of all those liege and friendly folk
 Bright-clad and laughing as if life were good. 40

“ Fair is the world,” he said, “ it likes me well !
And light and kind these men that are not kings,
And sweet my sisters here, who toil and tend ;
What have I done for these to make them thus ?
Why, if I love them, should those children know ?
I pray take up yon pretty Sākya boy
Who flung us flowers, and let him ride with me.
How good it is to reign in realms like this !
How simple pleasure is, if these be pleased
Because I come abroad ! How many things 50
I need not if such little households hold
Enough to make our city full of smiles !
Drive, Channa ! through the gates, and let me see
More of this gracious world I have not known.”

So passed they through the gates, a joyous crowd
Thronging about the wheels, whereof some ran
Before the oxen, throwing wreaths ; some stroked
Their silken flanks; some brought them rice and cakes,
All crying, “ *Jai ! jai !* for our noble Prince ! ”
Thus all the path was kept with gladsome looks 60
And filled with fair sights—for the king’s word was
‘ That such should be—when midway in the road,
Slow tottering from the hovel where he hid,
Crept forth a wretch in rags, haggard and foul,
An old, old man, whose shrivelled skin, sun-tanned,
Clung like a beast’s hide to its fleshless bones.
Bent was his back with load of many days,
His eyepits red with rust of ancient tears,

His dim orbs blear with rheum, his toothless jaws
Wagging with palsy and the fright to see 70
So many and such joy. One skinny hand
Clutched a worn staff to prop his quavering limbs,
And one was pressed upon the ridge of ribs
Whence came in gasps the heavy painful breath.
“ Alms ! ” moaned he, “ give, good people ! for I die
To-morrow or the next day ! ” then the cough
Choked him, but still he stretched his palm, and stood
Blinking, and groaning ’mid his spasms, “ Alms ! ”
Then those around had wrenched his feeble feet
Aside, and thrust him from the road again, 80
Saying, “ The Prince ! dost see ? get to thy lair ! ”
But that Siddârtha cried, “ Let be ! let be !
Channa ! what thing is this who seems a man,
Yet surely only seems, being so bowed,
So miserable, so horrible, so sad ?
Are men born sometimes thus ? What meaneth he
Moaning ‘ to-morrow or next day I die ? ’
Finds he no food that so his bones jut forth ?
What woe hath happened to this piteous one ? ”
Then answer made the charioteer, “ Sweet Prince ! 90
This is no other than an aged man ;
Some fourscore years ago his back was straight,
His eye bright, and his body goodly : now
The thievish years have sucked his sap away,
Pillaged his strength and filched his will and wit ;
His lamp has lost its oil, the wick burns black ;

What life he keeps is one poor lingering spark
Which flickers for the finish : such is age ;
Why should your Highness need ? ” Then spake the
Prince :

“ But shall this come to others, or to all, 100

Or is it rare that one should be as he ? ”

“ Most noble,” answered Channa, “ even as he,
Will all these grow if they shall live so long.”

“ But,” quoth the Prince, “ if I shall live as long
Shall I be thus ; and if Yasôdhara

Live fourscore years, is this old age for her,

Jâlîni, little Hasta, Gautami,

And Gunga, and the others ? ” “ Yea, great Sir ! ”

The charioteer replied. Then spake the Prince :

“ Turn back, and drive me to my house again ! 110

I have seen that I did not think to see.”

Which pondering, to his beauteous Court returned
Wistful Siddârtha, sad of mien and mood ;

Nor tasted he the white cakes nor the fruits

Spread for the evening feast, nor once looked up

While the best palace-dancers strove to charm :

Nor spake—save one sad thing—when wofully

Yasôdhara sank to his feet and wept,

Sighing, “ Hath not my Lord comfort in me ? ”

“ Ah, Sweet ! ” he said, “ such comfort that my 120
soul

Aches, thinking it must end, for it will end,

And we shall both grow old, Yasôdhara !

Loveless, unlovely, weak, and old, and bowed.
Nay, though we locked up love and life with lips
So close that night and day our breaths grew one,
Time would thrust in between to filch away
My passion and thy grace, as black Night steals
The rose-gleams from yon peak, which fade to grey
And are not seen to fade. This have I found,
And all my heart is darkened with its dread, 130
And all my heart is fixed to think how Love
Might save its sweetness from the slayer, Time,
Who makes men old." So through that night he sate
Sleepless, uncomforted.

James Thomson

ART

What precious thing are you making fast
In all these silken lines ?
And where and to whom will it go at last ?
Such subtle knots and twines !

I am tying up all my love in this,
With all its hopes and fears,
With all its anguish and all its bliss,
And its hours as heavy as years.

I am going to send it afar, afar,
To I know not where above ; 10
To that sphere beyond the highest star
Where dwells the soul of my Love.

But in vain, in vain, would I make it fast
With countless subtle twines ;
For ever its fire breaks out at last,
And shrivels all the lines.

IN THE ROOM

The sun was down, and twilight grey
Fill'd half the air ; but in the room,
Whose curtain had been drawn all day,
The twilight was dusky gloom :
Which seem'd at first as still as death,
And void ; but was indeed all rife
With subtle thrills, the pulse and breath
Of multitudinous lower life.

In their abrupt and headlong way
Bewilder'd flies for light had dash'd 10
Against the curtain all the day,
And now slept wintrily abash'd ;

And nimble mice slept, wearied out
 With such a double night's uproar ;
But solid beetles crawl'd about
 The chilly hearth and naked floor.

And so throughout the twilight hour
 That vaguely murmurous hush and rest
There brooded ; and beneath its power
 Life throbbing held its throbs suppress : 20
Until the thin-voiced mirror sigh'd,
 I am all blurr'd with dust and damp,
So long ago the clear day died,
 So long has gleamed nor fire nor lamp.

Whereon the curtain murmur'd back,
 Some change is on us, good or ill ;
Behind me and before is black
 As when those human things lie still :
But I have seen the darkness grow
 As grows the daylight every morn ; 30
Have felt out there long shine and glow,
 In here long chilly dusk forlorn.

The cupboard grumbled with a groan,
 Each new day worse starvation brings :
Since *he* came here I have not known
 Or sweets or cates or wholesome things :

But now ! a pinch of meal, a crust,
Throughout the week is all I get.
I am so empty ; it is just
As when they said we were to let. 40

What is become, then, of our Man ?
The petulant old glass exclaim'd ;
If all this time he slumber can,
He really ought to be ashamed.
I wish we had our Girl again,
So gay and busy, bright and fair :
The girls are better than these men,
Who only for their dull selves care.

It is so many hours ago—
The lamp and fire were both alight— 50
I saw him pacing to and fro,
Perturbing restlessly the night.
His face was pale to give one fear,
His eyes when lifted looked too bright ;
He mutter'd ; what, I could not hear :
Bad words though ; something was not right.

The table said, He wrote so long
That I grew weary of his weight ;
The pen kept up a cricket song,
It ran and ran at such a rate : 60
And in the longer pauses he
With both his folded arms downpress'd

And stared as one who does not see,
Or sank his head upon his breast.

The fire-grate said, I am as cold
As if I never had a blaze ;
The few dead cinders here I hold,
I held unburn'd for days and days.
Last night he made them flare ; but still
What good did all his writing do ? 70
Among my ashes curl and thrill
Thin ghosts of all those papers too.

The table answer'd, Not quite all ;
He saved and folded up one sheet,
And seal'd it fast, and let it fall ;
And here it lies now white and neat.
Whereon the letter's whisper came,
My writing is closed up too well ;
Outside there's not a single name,
And who should read me I can't tell. 80

The mirror sneer'd with scornful spite,
(That ancient crack which spoil'd her looks
Had marr'd her temper), Write and write !
And read those stupid, worn-out books !
That's all he does,—read, write, and read,
And smoke that nasty pipe which stinks :
He never takes the slightest heed
How any of us feels or thinks.

But Lucy fifty times a day
 Would come and smile here in my face, 90
Adjust a tress that curl'd astray,
 Or tie a ribbon with more grace :
She look'd so young and fresh and fair,
 She blush'd with such a charming bloom,
It did one good to see her there,
 And brighten'd all things in the room.

She did not sit hours stark and dumb
 As pale as moonshine by the lamp ;
To lie in bed when day was come,
 And leave us curtain'd chill and damp. 100
She slept away the dreary dark,
 And rose to greet the pleasant morn ;
And sang as gaily as a lark
 While busy as the flies sun-born.

And how she loved us every one ;
 And dusted this and mended that,
With trills and laughs and freaks of fun,
 And tender scoldings in her chat !
And then her bird, that sang as shrill
 As she sang sweet ; her darling flowers 110
That grew there in the window-sill,
 Where she would sit at work for hours.

It was not much she ever wrote ;
 Her fingers had good work to do ;

Say, once a week a pretty note ;
 And very long it took her too.
And little more she read, I wis ;
 Just now and then a pictured sheet,
Besides those letters she would kiss
 And croon for hours, they were so sweet. 120

She had her friends too, blithe young girls,
 Who whisper'd, babbled, laugh'd, caress'd,
And romp'd and danced with dancing curls,
 And gave our life a joyous zest.
But with this dullard, glum and sour,
 Not one of all his fellow-men
Has ever pass'd a social hour ;
 We might be in some wild beast's den.

This long tirade aroused the bed,
 Who spoke in deep and ponderous bass, 130
Befitting that calm life he led,
 As if firm-rooted in his place :
In broad majestic bulk alone,
 As in thrice venerable age,
He stood at once the royal throne,
 The monarch, the experienced sage :

I know what is and what has been ;
 Not anything to me comes strange,
Who in so many years have seen
 And lived through every kind of change. 140

I know when men are good or bad,
 When well or ill, he slowly said ;
When sad or glad, when sane or mad,
 And when they sleep alive or dead.

At this last word of solemn lore
 A tremor circled through the gloom,
As if a crash upon the floor
 Had jarr'd and shaken all the room :
For nearly all the listening things
 Were old and worn, and knew what curse 150
Of violent change death often brings,
 From good to bad, from bad to worse ;

They get to know each other well,
 To feel at home and settled down ;
Death bursts among them like a shell,
 And strews them over all the town.
The bed went on, This man who lies
 Upon me now is stark and cold ;
He will not any more arise,
 And do the things he did of old. 160

But we shall have short peace or rest ;
 For soon up here will come a rout,
And nail him in a queer long chest,
 And carry him like luggage out.
They will be muffled all in black,
 And whisper much, and sigh and weep :

But he will never more come back,
And some one else in me must sleep.

Thereon a little phial shrill'd,
Here empty on the chair I lie : 170
I heard one say, as I was fill'd,
With half of this a man would die.
The man there drank me with slow breath,
And murmur'd, Thus ends barren strife :
O sweeter, thou cold wine of death,
Than ever sweet warm wine of life !

One of my cousins long ago,
A little thing, the mirror said,
Was carried to a couch to show,
Whether a man was really dead. 180
Two great improvements marked the case :
He did not blur her with his breath,
His many-wrinkled, twitching face
Was smooth old ivory : verdict, Death.—

It lay, the lowest thing there, lull'd
Sweet-sleep-like in corruption's truce ;
The form whose purpose was annull'd,
While all the other shapes meant use.
It lay, then *he* become now *it*,
Unconscious of the deep disgrace, 190
Unanxious how its parts might flit
Through what new forms in time and space.

It lay and preach'd, as dumb things do,
More powerfully than tongues can prate ;
Though life be torture through and through,
Man is but weak to plain of fate :
The drear path crawls on drearier still
To wounded feet and hopeless breast ?
Well, he can lie down when he will,
And straight all ends in endless rest.

200

And while the black night nothing saw,
And till the cold morn came at last,
That old bed held the room in awe
With tales of its experience vast.
It thrill'd the gloom ; it told such tales
Of human sorrows and delights,
Of fever moans and infant wails,
Of births and deaths and bridal nights.

Thomas Hardy

THE DARKLING THRUSH

I leant upon a coppice gate
When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.

The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant, 10
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited ; 20
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carollings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,

That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

30

— — —

“ I NEED NOT GO ” .

I need not go
Through sleet and snow
To where I know
She waits for me ;
She will tarry me there
Till I find it fair,
And have time to spare
From company.

When I've overgot
The world somewhat,
When things cost not
Such stress and strain,
Is soon enough
By cypress sough
To tell my Love
I am come again.

10

And if some day,
 When none cries nay,
 I still delay
 To seek her side, 20
 (Though ample measure
 Of fitting leisure
 Await my pleasure)
 She will not chide.

What—not upbraid me
 That I delayed me,
 Nor ask what stayed me
 So long ? Ah, no !—
 New cares may claim me,
 New loves inflame me, 30
 She will not blame me,
 But suffer it so.

WEATHERS

I

This is the weather the cuckoo likes,
 And so do I ;
 When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
 And nestlings fly :
 And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
 And they sit outside at “ The Travellers’ Rest,”

And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the south and west,
And so do I.

II

This is the weather the shepherd shuns, 10
And so do I ;
When beeches drip in browns and duns,
And thresh, and ply ;
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
And meadow rivulets overflow,
And drops on gate-bars hang in a row,
And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

PIED BEAUTY

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow ;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim ;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls ; finches' wings ;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and
plough ;
And áll trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange ;

Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how ?)

With swift, slow ; sweet, sour ; adazzle, dim ;

He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change : 10

Praise him.

INVERSNAID

This darksome burn, horseback brown,

His rollrock highroad rolling down,

In coop and in comb the fleece of his foam

Flutes and low to the lake falls home.

A windpuff-bonnet of fáwn-fróth

Turns and twindles over the broth

Of a pool so pitchblack, féll-frówning,

It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning.

Degged with dew, dappled with dew

Are the groins of the braes that the brook treads 10
through,

Wiry heathpacks, flitches of fern,

And the beadbony ash that sits over the burn.

What would the world be, once bereft

Of wet and of wildness ? Let them be left,

O let them be left, wildness and wet ;

Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.

Robert Bridges

LONDON SNOW

When men were all asleep the snow came flying,
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,

Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town ;
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing ;
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down :

Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing ;
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.

All night it fell, and when full inches seven 10
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,

The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven ;

And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed bright-
ness

Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare :

The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling white-
ness ;

The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air ;
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.

Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,
They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze 20

Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snow-
balling ;

Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees ;

Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
' O look at the trees ! ' they cried, ' O look at the
trees ! '

With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,
Following along the white deserted way,
A country company long dispersed asunder :

When now already the sun, in pale display
Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below
His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day. 30

For now doors open, and war is waged with the
snow ;

And trains of sombre men, past tale of number,
Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go :

But even for them awhile no cares encumber
Their minds diverted ; the daily word is unspoken,
The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow slumber
At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the
charm they have broken.

A PASSER-BY

Whither, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
 Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
 Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest ?
 Ah ! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest,
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
 Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well thou
 knowest,
 Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air : 10
I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
 And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
 Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare ;
Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped,
 grandest
 Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair
Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou
 standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,
 I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
 Thy port assured in a happier land than mine. 20
 But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is
 thine,

As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,
From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.

ELEGY

The wood is bare : a river-mist is steeping
The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves :
Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping
Over their fallen leaves ;

That lie upon the dank earth brown and rotten,
Miry and matted in the soaking wet :
Forgotten with the spring, that is forgotten
By them that can forget.

Yet it was here we walked when ferns were springing,
And through the mossy bank shot bud and 10
blade :—

Here found in summer, when the birds were singing,
A green and pleasant shade.

'Twas here we loved in sunnier days and greener ;
And now, in this disconsolate decay,
I come to see her where I most have seen her,
And touch the happier day.

For on this path, at every turn and corner,
The fancy of her figure on me falls :
Yet walks she with the slow step of a mourner,
Nor hears my voice that calls. 20

So through my heart there winds a track of feeling,
A path of memory, that is all her own :
Whereto her phantom beauty ever stealing
Haunts the sad spot alone.

About her steps the trunks are bare, the branches
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head ;
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun stanches,
For the year's sun is dead.

And dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer planted :
And birds that love the South have taken wing. 30
The wanderer, loitering o'er the scene enchanted,
Weeps, and despairs of spring.

R. L. Stevenson

THE VAGABOND

Give to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above
And the byway nigh me.

Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river—
There's the life for a man like me,
There's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me ; 10
Give the face of earth around
And the road before me.
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me ;
All I seek, the heaven above
And the road below me.

Or let autumn fall on me
Where afield I linger,
Silencing the bird on tree,
Biting the blue finger. 20
White as meal the frosty field—
Warm the fireside haven—
Not to autumn will I yield,
Not to winter even !

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me ;
Give the face of earth around,
And the road before me.

Wealth I ask not, hope nor love
Nor a friend to know me ; 30
All I ask, the heaven above
And the road below me.

Alice Meynell

THE LADY POVERTY

The Lady Poverty was fair :
But she has lost her looks of late,
With change of times and change of air.
Ah slattern ! she neglects her hair,
Her gown, her shoes ; she keeps no state
As once when her pure feet were bare.

Or—almost worse, if worse can be—
She scolds in parlours, dusts and trims,
Watches and counts. Oh, is this she
Whom Francis met, whose step was free, 10
Who with Obedience carolled hymns,
In Umbria walked with Chastity ?

Where is her ladyhood ? Not here,
Not among modern kinds of men ;
But in the stony fields, where clear
Through the thin trees the skies appear,
In delicate spare soil and fen,
And slender landscape and austere.

Francis Thompson

DAISY

Where the thistle lifts a purple crown
Six foot out of the turf,
And the harebell shakes on the windy hill—
O the breath of the distant surf !—

The hills look over on the South,
And southward dreams the sea ;
And with the sea-breeze hand in hand
Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry
Red for the gatherer springs,
Two children did we stray and talk
Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,
Breast-deep 'mid flower and spine :
Her skin was like a grape, whose veins
Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,
Nor knew her own sweet way ;
But there's never a bird, so sweet a song
Thronged in whose throat that day.

20

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington
On the turf and on the spray ;
But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills
Was the Daisy-flower that day !

Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face ;
She gave me tokens three :—
A look, a word of her winsome mouth,
And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,
A still word,—strings of sand !
And yet they made my wild, wild heart
Fly down to her little hand.

30

For standing artless as the air,
And candid as the skies,
She took the berries with her hand,
And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end,
Their scent survives their close :
But the rose's scent is bitterness
To him that loved the rose.

40

She looked a little wistfully,
Then went her sunshine way :—
The sea's eye had a mist on it,
And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,
She went and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone,
And partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul
Was sad that she was glad ;
At all the sadness in the sweet,
The sweetness in the sad.

50

Still, still I seemed to see her, still
Look up with soft replies,
And take the berries with her hand,
And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
That is not paid with moan ;
For we are born in other's pain,
And perish in our own.

60

Rudyard Kipling

THE WAY THROUGH THE WOODS

They shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.
Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know
There was once a road through the woods
Before they planted the trees.
It is underneath the coppice and heath,
And the thin anemones.
Only the keeper sees
That, where the ring-dove broods,
And the badgers roll at ease,
There was once a road through the woods.

10

Yet, if you enter the woods
Of a summer evening late,
When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools
Where the otter whistles his mate,
(They fear not men in the woods,
Because they see so few)
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,
Steadily cantering through
The misty solitudes,
As though they perfectly knew

20

The old lost road through the woods.....
But there is no road through the woods !

W. B. Yeats

EPHEMERA

“ Your eyes that once were never weary of mine
Are bowed in sorrow under pendulous lids,
Because our love is waning.”

And then she :

“ Although our love is waning, let us stand
By the lone border of the lake once more,
Together in that hour of gentleness
When the poor tired child, Passion, falls asleep :
How far away the stars seem, and how far
Is our first kiss, and ah, how old my heart ! ”

Pensive they paced along the faded leaves, 10
While slowly he whose hand held hers replied :
“ Passion has often worn our wandering hearts.”
The woods were round them, and the yellow leaves
Fell like faint meteors in the gloom, and once
A rabbit old and lame limped down the path ;
Autumn was over him : and now they stood
On the lone border of the lake once more :

Turning, he saw that she had thrust dead leaves
Gathered in silence, dewy as her eyes,
In bosom and hair.

“ Ah, do not mourn,” he said, 20
“ That we are tired, for other loves await us ;
Hate on and love through unrepining hours.
Before us lies eternity ; our souls
Are love, and a continual farewell.”

THE STOLEN CHILD

Where dips the rocky highland
Of Sleuth Wood in the lake,
There lies a leafy island
Where flapping herons wake
The drowsy water rats ;
There we've hid our faery vats,
Full of berries,
And of reddest stolen cherries.
*Come away, O human child !
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than
you can understand.*

Where the wave of 'moonlight glosses
The dim gray sands with light,
Far off by furthest Rosses
We foot it all the night,
Weaving olden dances,
Mingling hands and mingling glances
Till the moon has taken flight ;

To and fro we leap

20

And chase the frothy bubbles,
While the world is full of troubles
And is anxious in its sleep.

Come away, O human child !

To the waters and the wild

With a faery, hand in hand,

*For the world's more full of weeping than
you can understand.*

Where the wandering water gushes

From the hills above Glen-Car,

In pools among the rushes

30

That scarce could bathe a star,

We seek for slumbering trout

And whispering in their ears

Give them unquiet dreams ;

Leaning softly out

From ferns that drop their tears

Over the young streams,

Come away, O human child !

To the waters and the wild 40
With a faery, hand in hand,
For the world's more full of weeping than
you can understand.

Away with us he's going,
The solemn-eyed :
He'll hear no more the lowing
Of the calves on the warm hillside
Or the kettle on the hob
Sing peace into his breast,
Or see the brown mice bob
Round and round the oatmeal-chest. 50
For he comes, the human child,
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand,
From a world more full of weeping than
he can understand.

Lionel Pigot Johnson

BY THE STATUE OF KING CHARLES AT
CHARING CROSS

Sombre and rich, the skies,
Great glooms, and starry plains ;
Gently the night wind sighs ;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings
Around me : and around
The saddest of all Kings,
Crown'd, and again discrown'd.

Comely and calm, he rides
Hard by his own Whitehall, 10
Only the night wind glides :
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.

Gone, too, his Court : and yet,
The stars his courtiers are :
Stars in their stations set ;
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,
The fair and fatal King :
Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing. 20

Which are more full of fate :
The stars ; or those sad eyes ?
Which are more still and great :
Those brows, or the dark skies ?

Although his whole heart yearn
In passionate tragedy,
Never was face so stern
With sweet austerity.

Vanquish'd in life, his death
By beauty made amends : 30
The passing of his breath
Won his defeated ends.

Brief life, and hapless ? Nay :
Through death, life grew sublime.
Speak after sentence ? Yea :
And to the end of time.

Armoured he rides, his head
Bare to the stars of doom ;
He triumphs now, the dead,
Beholding London's gloom. 40

Our wearier spirit faints,
Vexed in the world's employ :
His soul was of the saints ;
And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe !
Men hunger for thy grace :
And through the night I go,
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet, when the city sleeps,
When all the cries are still, 50
The stars and heavenly deeps
Work out a perfect will.

George William Russell

THE GATES OF DREAMLAND

It's a lonely road through bogland to the lake at
Carrowmore,
And a sleeper there lies dreaming where the water
laps the shore ;
Though the moth-wings of the twilight in their
purples are unfurled,
Yet his sleep is filled with music by the masters of
the world.

There's a hand is white as silver that is fondling
with his hair :
There are glimmering feet of sunshine that are
dancing by him there :
And half-open lips of faery that were dyed a faery
red
In their revels where the Hazel Tree its holy
clusters shed.

"Come away," the red lips whisper, "all the world
is weary now ;
'Tis the twilight of the ages and it's time to quit 10
the plough.

Oh, the very sunlight's weary ere it lightens up
the dew,

And its gold is changed and faded before it falls to you.

“ Though your colleen's heart be tender, a tenderer
heart is near.

What's the starlight in her glances when the stars
are shining clear ?

Who would kiss the fading shadow when the
flower-face glows above ?

'Tis the Beauty of all Beauty that is calling for
your love.”

Oh, the great gates of the mountain have opened
once again,

And the sound of song and dancing falls upon the
ears of men,

And the Land of Youth lies gleaming, flushed with
rainbow light and mirth,

And the old enchantment lingers in the honey- 20
heart of earth.

A MEMORY OF EARTH

In the wet dusk silver-sweet,

Down the violet-scented ways,

As I moved with quiet feet

I was met by mighty day.

On the hedge the hanging dew
Glass'd the eve and stars and skies,
While I gazed a madness grew
Into thunder'd battle-cries.

Where the hawthorn glimmer'd white,
Flashed the spear and fell the stroke, 10
Ah, what faces pale and bright
Where the dazzling battle broke !

There a hero-hearted queen
With young beauty lit the van.
Gone ! the darkness flow'd between
All the ancient wars of man.

While I paced the valley's gloom,
Where the rabbits patter'd near,
Shone a temple and a tomb
With a legend carven clear : 20

*Time put by a myriad fates
That her day might dawn in glory :
Death made wide a million gates
So to close her tragic story.*

THE MAN TO THE ANGEL

I have wept a million tears ;
Pure and proud one, where are thine ?
What the gain tho' all thy years
In unbroken beauty shine ?

All your beauty cannot win
Truth we learn in pain and sighs :
You can never enter in
To the circle of the wise.

They are but the slaves of light
Who have never known the gloom, 10
And between the dark and light
Will'd in freedom their own doom.

Think not, in your pureness there,
That our pain but follows sin ;
There are fires for those who dare
Seek the throne of might to win.

Pure one, from your pride refrain :
Dark and lost amid the strife,
I am myriad years of pain
Nearer to the fount of life. 20

When defiance fierce is thrown
At the God to whom you bow,
Rest the lips of the Unknown
Tenderest upon my brow.

Walter de la Mare

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveller,
 Knocking on the moonlit door;
 And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
 Of the forest's ferny floor:
 And a bird flew up out of the turret,
 Above the Traveller's head:
 And he smote upon the door again a second time;
 "Is there anybody there?" he said.
 But no one descended to the Traveller;
 No head from the leaf-fringed sill
 Leaned over and looked into his gray eyes,
 Where he stood perplexed and still.
 But only a host of phantom listeners
 That dwelt in the lone house then
 Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
 To that voice from the world of men:
 Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
 That goes down to the empty hall,
 Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
 By the lonely Traveller's call.
 And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
 Their stillness answering his cry,

While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
 'Neath the starred and leafy sky ;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
 Louder, and lifted his head :—
“ Tell them I came, and no one answered,
 That I kept my word,” he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
 Though every word he spake 30
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
 From the one man left awake :
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
 And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
 When the plunging hoofs were gone.

Edward Thomas

ADLESTROP

Yes. I remember Adlestrop—
The name, because one afternoon
Of heat the express-train drew up there
Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
No one left and no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop—only the name

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry 10
No whit less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

Rupert Brooke

“ THESE HEARTS WERE WOVEN OF HUMAN JOYS AND CARES ”

These hearts were woven of human joys and cares,
Washed marvellously with sorrow, swift to mirth.
The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,
And sunset, and the colours of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music ; known
Slumber and walking ; loved ; gone proudly friended ;
Felt the quick stir of wonder ; sat alone ;
Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended.
There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after, 10

Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white
Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
A width, a shining peace, under the night.

Wilfred Owen

THE SEND-OFF

Down the close, darkening lanes they sang their way
To the siding-shed,
And lined the train with faces grimly gay.

Their breasts were stuck all white with wreath and
 spray
As men's are, dead.

Dull porters watched them, and a casual tramp
Stood staring hard,
Sorry to miss them from the upland camp.
Then, unmoved, signals nodded, and a lamp
Winked to the guard.

10

So secretly, like wrongs hushed-up, they went.
They were not ours:
We never heard to which front these were sent.

Nor there if they yet mock what women meant
Who gave them flowers.

Shall they return to beatings of great bells
In wild train-loads ?

A few, a few, too few for drums and yells,
May creep back, silent, to village wells
Up half-known roads.



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